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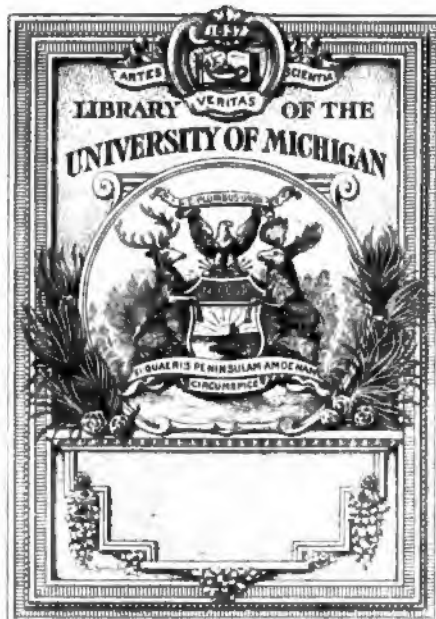
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OF THE
NAVY RECORDS SOCIETY
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VOL. XLVIII.

THE SPENCER PAPERS

VOL. II.

PRIVATE PAPERS
OF
George, second Earl Spencer

FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY

1794-1801

EDITED BY

JULIAN S. CORBETT, LL.M.

VOL. II.



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NAVY RECORDS SOCIETY.

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

*Read at the Twenty-first Annual General Meeting,
June 30, 1914.*

THE total number of subscribers, as shown by the List of Members recently circulated, is 532.

Although the losses which the Society has sustained by deaths during the year 1913-14 are happily not so numerous as during the preceding year, they include Admiral Sir Charles Drury and Admiral Parr, two of our early members, and Sir Henry Yorke, Hon. Treasurer from the foundation of the Society until his retirement in 1903. The services which Sir Henry Yorke rendered to the Society, not only as Treasurer, but also as a Member of Council, make his loss especially felt.

Since the last General Meeting the arrears of the Society's publications have been entirely overtaken. Captain Richmond's volume on *The Loss of Minorca* (for 1911) was soon followed by Volume III. of *The Naval Tracts of Sir William Monson* (for 1912). In addition to these, both the volumes for 1913, viz. Mr. Corbett's first volume of *The Spencer Papers*, and Volume IV. of *Monson's Tracts*, were in the hands of members before the close of the year, and with the issue of Mr. Grant's volume on *The Old Scots Navy* early in the present year (for 1912), all outstanding obligations were fulfilled. For the current year

it is intended to issue a second volume of *The Spencer Papers*, and Volume V. (and last) of *Monson's Tracts*, which will contain an index to the whole work. The issue of both these volumes may be expected before the close of 1914.

With the completion of *Monson's Tracts* Mr. Oppenheim concludes the labour he has so generously undertaken on behalf of the Society ; a labour for which not only the Society but future historians will be greatly indebted to him.

The publications for 1915 will consist of *Materials for a History of Prize Law*, which Mr. R. G. Marsden has kindly volunteered to edit, and a third volume of the *Naval Miscellany*, which will contain treatises on Ancient Shipbuilding from the Pepysian Library and the *Autobiography* of Phineas Pett.

The Balance Sheet is appended.



PART I

MEDITERRANEAN PAPERS

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF SIR JOHN JERVIS'S
COMMAND TO THE BATTLE OF ST. VINCENT



INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE papers included in this part are selected from those referred to in the General Introduction (vol. i. p. xxi.) which came to light too late to be included in the first volume. They should therefore be read with those contained in Part VII. They will also be found to throw light on Part VIII, as showing why it was that the arrangements for intercepting Hoche's expedition to Ireland were so seriously confused by the apprehension that his objective might be Portugal.

A special feature of interest is that in the private letters of Jervis and Man we can see precisely how the latter's decision to bring his squadron home instead of returning to the Mediterranean appeared in the eyes of both officers. It is to be feared, however, after making all allowance for the state of health and nerves into which Man had fallen, his explanation of the reasons that guided him will do little to remove the cloud on his reputation. Some blame may attach to the Board for not superseding him earlier, since he wished to be recalled, and they well knew what his condition was. But capable admirals were hard to find for all stations. As to Man himself, it is only fair to recall that Jervis regarded him as 'an officer of great ability and experience,' and to attribute his failure to a nervous breakdown. That such nervous collapses were not unknown in the old navy, even amongst younger and less severely tried officers, is clear from Jervis's account of the loss of the *Courageux*. Jervis's opinion of some of his other officers serves to show how difficult it is even for a man of his ripe judgment and experience to form

an accurate estimate of any man's capacity for high command. This is particularly evident in his appreciation of the comparative merits of his two most promising captains, Nelson and Troubridge.

At the time this series of letters begins, Jervis had just reached Gibraltar in the *Lively* frigate, on his way to take up the Mediterranean command. He there met Admiral Man, who had put in to refit the squadron with which he had been detached by Hotham in chase of *De Richery*.

The headquarters of the fleet at this time were at San Fiorenzo Bay, in the north of Corsica—the island being then a British possession, with Sir Gilbert Elliot (afterwards Earl of Minto) as Viceroy. Leghorn had been the refitting and victualling port, but as in February, 1795, the Grand Duke of Tuscany had made peace with France, it could no longer be relied on. Communication with the Admiralty was still open overland by way of Hamburg.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

[Gibraltar] 23rd November, 1795.

My Lord,—We have had the good fortune to reach this Bay without any interruption, although it is reported Mr. Richery's frigates have been cruising off St. Vincent. The long passage and rough weather Admiral Man encountered created some wants and defects in his squadron which he has used the utmost diligence in supplying; he will proceed on his mission with the first easterly wind, and perform everything that can be expected from an officer of great ability and experience. Your lordship must be aware of the impracticability of blocking a port at this season of the year, the coast of which is extremely dangerous with the wind on the shore.¹

In addition to the National brig anchored in Tangier Bay it is said Monsieur Richery is fitting out an Irish wherry to be stationed at Tarifa, by which the British trade will be very much distressed, and I learn from Admiral Man that the want of a sufficient number of frigates has prevented anything being attached to this service, and the squadron when cruising has seldom been accompanied by more than two frigates of the smaller class. I therefore beg leave to call your

¹ In September Rear-Admiral de Richery, with six of the line and three frigates, had run out of Toulon, while Lord Hotham was at San Fiorenzo. Man, with one three-decker, five 74's and two frigates, was detached in chase three weeks later. De Richery cut up a British convoy and then went into Cadiz, where Man was ordered to watch him. Man had come out from home to reinforce Hotham the previous June.

attention to the increase of the number and force of this most necessary means of procuring intelligence, annoying the enemy, and protecting the trade along such an extent of coast. Admiral Man having very judiciously ordered the *Dido* to cruise in the Gut for the protection of the trade, I have directed Captain Hotham¹ to continue on this service, and I will make some addition, the moment I have it in my power, for the vessels which supply the garrison with fresh provisions from Barbary require constant convoy.

Your lordship will have been apprised that Admiral Man fell in with the *Republicaine* and frigates you sent me a list of, and as he gave timely information to Admiral Hotham, I take for granted a detachment was made after them.² I find no letter from the Admiral. The master of a vessel from Leghorn reports that he and Admiral Goodall had landed there,³ and were on their journey to England, and that Sir Hyde Parker⁴ was about to proceed on a cruise the 9th instant.

I hear nothing new respecting Algiers, but trust that measures will be taken, without delay, to reconcile the differences which have arisen there.

The Cartel with the English prisoners from Cadiz not having been heard of, it is to be apprehended the people have either landed in Portugal, or are trying to get to Ireland.

¹ Capt. Henry Hotham had just been appointed to the *Dido*.

² Ganteaume (then *chef de division*) had also been allowed to get out of Toulon in September with a 74 and six cruisers, and was cutting up our commerce in the Levant. Capt. Troubridge was sent after him by Jervis with two of the line and three frigates, but failed to prevent his return to Toulon.

³ Vice-Admiral S. C. Goodall had been Hotham's second-in-command.

⁴ Sir Hyde Parker was acting commander-in-chief till Jervis arrived.

I hope to sail this evening, and have the honour
to be,

Your lordship's most obedient

humble servant,

J. JERVIS.

Lively, Gibraltar Bay.

SPENCER TO JERVIS

14th January, 1796.

Dear Sir,—I was very happy to hear of your safe arrival at St. Fiorenzo, and the uncommon shortness of your passage, which completely justified your determination of running it in a single frigate, and has enabled you to take upon yourself so much earlier than we had reason to hope the very important and interesting command with which His Majesty has been pleased to entrust you.

I received your letter of the 3rd ultimo on the 11th instant, but have not yet had an opportunity of coming to any determination on the subject of the Island of Capraja to which you allude, nor indeed am I yet apprised whether the Viceroy has made any representation on it.

The opinions expressed by several of the officers of the fleet on the subject of Ajaccio as a refitting port are so various, that it is extremely difficult to form any decision on the subject at a distance from the place itself. It was selected in consequence of a very strong report to the Board in favour of it transmitted by Lord Hood, and when I came into the situation I have now the honour of holding, I found the arrangements of

the establishment then actually taking place ; though it was not till a short time after my being at the Board that they were completed. Since that time both Admiral Hotham and Sir Hyde Parker, as well as yourself, have represented so much inconvenience to arise in some respects from the relative situation of that port with the usual rendezvous of the fleet,¹ that it should at least appear advisable not to expend much on the establishment till more positive grounds of decision can be obtained. An opportunity may possibly offer to you of visiting Ajaccio yourself, which may enable you to give a more decided opinion upon it ; and if that should be the case, I shall be very glad to hear the result of it. One thing I could wish you to be aware of, that there may perhaps be several reasons which weigh against Ajaccio when put in competition with Leghorn, as a refitting station, which may rather be founded on the private interests or conveniences of individuals than arise out of an impartial consideration of the public service alone. I shall feel the fullest confidence that if you should be enabled to communicate any opinion on this point, it will be entirely guided by the latter.

Your letter to the Board of the 10th ultimo received very soon after those of the 3rd (five Hamburg mails having come in in the space of twenty-four hours), in conveying the information of your having detached Captain Troubridge to the Archipelago, gives us the most sanguine hopes of some success in that quarter, and I hope the rest of your plan of operations will also be attended with some favourable events to relieve a little the regret which cannot but be

¹ San Fiorenzo Bay or Gulf, in the north of Corsica.

felt very strongly at the great disasters which have befallen our allies on the shore of the Mediterranean.¹ We are flattered here with the accounts of the loss of two of Monsieur Richery's squadron in Cadiz Bay, but not having yet heard either from Cadiz or Gibraltar, we are not quite sure of it.

I forgot to mention that from some private intelligence we have reason to believe that the French squadron which has sailed for the Archipelago is intended to pass the Dardanelles, and go into the Black Sea, whither I hope Captain Troubridge's instructions may authorise him to follow them, as I conclude that if the Turkish Government permit them to pass those straits, they cannot in fairness refuse the same permission to us.

I hope Waldegrave will have joined you safe with his convoy ;² and that you will have received the intelligence I sent you in my last letter of a small squadron destined to leave Toulon in the end of November last, of whose sailing however I have not seen any accounts in the French papers. The Boston and Dromedary store-ships with their convoy are still detained at Spithead by the very uncommon continuance of south-westerly winds and violent gales, but I hope they will soon be able to sail.

I am, dear Sir, with great respect,

Yours &c., &c.,

SPENCER.

¹ Referring to the successful operations of the French under Schérer, Masséna and Joubert during the autumn, in which both the Austrians and Sardinians had been driven from their positions in north-west Italy.

² Vice-Admiral William Waldegrave, first Baron Radstock.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

24th January, 1796.

My Lord,—The squadron is very near complete in water and provisions, but will be detained some little time by the difficulty there is in getting at the stores, masts and yards wanting out of the Chichester. . . . Your lordship will have received from Admiral Man, the apprehensions that he and General O'Hara are under of a hostile disposition on the part of Spain.¹ It is certain they are concentrating all their naval force at Cadiz, Lieutenant Colombine of the Resolution having fallen in with the Carthagen Division off Cape de Gata, steering down the Mediterranean with a fresh easterly wind. General O'Hara is very pressing for an addition of naval force, and of a kind better adapted to the defence of the garrison victuallers against row boats. The cutters come the nearest to it of any thing I have, and I have desired Admiral Man to release the Resolution, and Lieutenant Colombine has my orders to put himself under the command of Captain Hotham of the Dido, who is the senior officer employed in the service of the garrison.

I have not yet been able to give any protection to the trade on the coast of Spain within the Mediterranean, by attaching cruisers to the headlands near the most frequented ports, and I learn with great concern that the French corvette L'Alerte (taken from us) has intercepted two brigs from Newfoundland bound to Alicante. The channel between Bastia and Leghorn is so

¹ Lieut.-General William O'Hara, having been wounded and taken prisoner at Toulon in 1793, had been exchanged in August 1795 and made Governor of Gibraltar.

much infested by privateers that most of the small armed vessels are employed in the protection of it. Some are so much out of repair, and short of complement, that I despair of their ever coming from Ajaccio. The *Magnanime*, *Belette*, *Poulette*, and *Tarleton* are of this description, and the *Mutine* cutter has been lying two months at Leghorn performing quarantine and repairing.

I have heard nothing from the Levant since Captain Troubridge sailed, but hope soon to be relieved from the anxiety I am under about the *Nemesis*.¹

Should your lordship not be able to send my relation Captain D'Arcy Preston to me in a sloop, may I request you will give him post at home? ²

The Neapolitan ships are afflicted with a contagious fever, which is very alarming, and I have, upon the representation of the Marquis Espluge, confirmed by the report of the physician of the fleet, ordered them to proceed to Naples for the recovery of the health of their people, and with the permission of the Court to join me again; they are too ill clothed and fed to stand much service in the winter season. In all other respects too much cannot be said in praise of both officers and men, and I shall be very glad to see them again.

Captain Nelson has declined the command of the *Zealous*. I therefore shall appoint Captain

¹ The *Nemesis* (28), Capt. Samuel Hood Linzee, had been captured on 9th December by the *Sensible* and *Sardine* in the neutral port of Smyrna where her captors were blockaded by Capt. Samuel Hood with two frigates till Ganteaume's squadron forced him to retire. The *Nemesis* was then taken into Tunis by the *Sardine*.

² He came out in the *Blanche* (32).

Hood to the command of her ;¹ and as I learn from Mr. Wyndham, that an alarm is taken for the safety of Massa-Carrara,² and the neighbouring States under the protection of the Emperor, I intend employing Captain Nelson in the Gulf of Genoa, where he has so eminently distinguished himself, lamenting I cannot add anything to the two frigates Vice-Admiral Waldegrave appointed on the requisition of Mr. Wyndham. I only wait the Viceroy's determination to send the transports to Trieste for the foreign corps intended for this island. It is a tedious navigation, and I trust Lord Huntley's regiment will not be ordered from hence, until they return, on many accounts.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Your lordship's most obedient

humble servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, San Fiorenzo Bay.

REAR-ADMIRAL MAN TO SPENCER

7th March, 1796.

My Lord,—I had the honour of addressing a letter to your lordship the latter end of December, by Captain Phillips of the army, who proceeded home with dispatches from Lieutenant-General O'Hara ; though I fear his detention at Lisbon (which I learnt after the Cyclops was sailed) has prevented my letter reaching so soon as the triplicate of the one forwarded by him, to the Admiralty, has done by that ship ; but I trust

¹ Capt. Samuel Hood, younger brother of Alexander Hood—both first cousins, once removed, to Lords Hood and Bridport.

² The Duchy of Massa-Carrara was that part of Modena which brought it to the sea. The Hon. William Frederick Wyndham was British Minister in Tuscany.

it has since reached your hands, as by it I took the liberty of mentioning to your lordship my wish of receiving some further instructions for my guidance, it not being then in my power to gain any information of the enemy's intentions ; and I am sorry to say, I am still as much in the dark as at first, unless it is with respect to provisions. They are no doubt increasing them, and supposed sufficient to last six months,—this is the only indication we have towards their being intended for foreign service ; and when I consider their having no troops above their complement as marines, the general state of the ships' companies, who are universally said to be much discontented on account of their prize money, and to have used Monsieur Richery so ill on board his ship, as to seize him and threaten him with confinement, and the force we have in the West Indies, notwithstanding the untoward circumstances that have attended Admiral Christian,¹ I cannot conceive what they can expect by going to that country ; for without troops, I should suppose nothing can be done above mere cruising against our trade, and our superiority must, I think, put that out of the question. But they may be intended to join a force from some other port ; should it turn out so, the case would be altered, though I cannot think there is much likelihood of it.

Sir John Jervis, with a letter of the 19th January, was pleased to forward me copies of his last intelligence from Toulon ; they are as late as the 9th of that month, and by them it is reported they were assembling an army of 30,000 men about Marseilles and Toulon, and were preparing of transports ; yet it does not appear

¹ See vol. i. pp. 133-4.

that they can have above fifteen sail of the line to escort them ; and if they really are intended for any service on which sea-force is to assist them, this is not sufficient. Therefore it is not improbable, but Monsieur Richery may have increased his provisions partly by way of deception, as well as to obtain what they are supposed to stand much need of (both provisions and stores), and when opportunity offers [will] make his push to return from whence he came. Should this be the case, it would make them superior to our fleet, and is therefore necessary I should look to them on this point, equally with any other. But, my Lord, circumstanced as I am, I trust you will see that I have nothing but mere conjecture to point out the road I ought to follow, and I can assure you I never felt so truly embarrassed. My wish to perform the service I have the honour to be employed on, with the chances against me of striking on the right point, I must acknowledge, gives me very great uneasiness. However I can only hope for success, and act to the best of my judgment on the information I may receive, and the circumstances attendant on their leaving Cadiz should we happen to miss them.

As your lordship must wish to know my intentions should I find it necessary to proceed to the West Indies, I beg leave to inform you that I mean to call at Carlisle Bay first, to complete our provisions and water before I proceed to Martinique, when I expect to be at a certainty whether Monsieur Richery has appeared at any of the islands in those seas. Should I not hear from him, I mean to proceed to St. Domingo, look into the ports on the north side down to Cape Nichola Bay; and if I cannot learn of his

being on that coast, I shall proceed to Jamaica to put the squadron into a proper state for its passage to England.

This, my Lord, is my present plan, unless I receive orders to the contrary ; and I must take the liberty of mentioning, that although I believe I shall find myself the senior officer in those seas, yet as I do not wish to deprive my friends of either their honour or emoluments, so I beg leave to say I had rather return with the squadron, unless your lordship finds occasion for my services in that country, though I fear they are not equal (except in zeal) to those of my friends already employed there ; but should I find Monsieur Richery arrived on either of the stations, I must remain there until further orders ; and as it is impossible I can serve under a junior officer, so I must assume the command for the time being, when I hope to be able to put in execution such orders and instructions as I may find unaccomplished ; and that my endeavours may prove honourable to his Majesty's service, and deserving of your lordship's approbation, will be the sincere prayers of, my Lord,

Your lordship's most obedient and
humble servant,
R. MAN.

I hope your lordship will not disapprove of my having ordered *La Sybille*¹ to join Sir John Jervis, knowing how short he is of frigates, and I too hope I shall not have incurred your lordship's displeasure and that of the Board, for taking the liberty of removing Lieutenant John Simpson, her first lieutenant, into the Windsor Castle, he

¹ See *post* pp. 17-18.

being a young man, whom I bred up in the service, and whom I wish for an opportunity of recommending to your lordship's favour and protection.

Windsor Castle, at Sea.

SPENCER TO MAN

25th March, 1796.

Dear Sir,—I have received this morning your letter of the 7th instant by the *Amphion*, who arrived at Yarmouth on the 22nd with the *Andromache*, having brought home all their convoy safe within the British and Irish channels. I partake of the anxiety you express about your further proceedings, from the great uncertainty of the enemy's destination, and your reasoning is very good upon the subject, especially considering the circumstance of their having no troops on board. It is not however quite conclusive, as the French are at present in the habit of sending out troops to the West Indies in neutral transports, some of which have lately been captured off Cape Guadeloupe. There is another destination to which it is just barely possible Monsieur Richery may be ordered to proceed, though in that quarter without troops he cannot expect to do much. I mean the Cape of Good Hope, whither we have some reason to think an armament is intended to go as soon as it can be equipped. Captain Stafford has captured a corvette with troops for the Isle of France, which had sailed early in this month, in company with three large frigates similarly laden; the frigates unfortunately did not fall in with him. Our intelligence says that the armament intended to attack either the Cape or some of our other

possessions in the East Indies, is to rendezvous at the Isle of France, and it is not quite impossible that they may choose to send a strong squadron, such as Monsieur Richery's, to co-operate with it. It appears now very probable that the Dutch fleet which sailed on the 23rd ultimo from the Texel, may be gone north-about; and if they are so, they must either be intended for the East or West Indies, or perhaps to take up troops at some port of France, in order to proceed with them to some such object.¹ All these circumstances put together lead me to think that they have in view to strike some blow at our late acquisition (the most important blow they could aim at us), and my making these observations to you only tends, as with respect to your observations, to point out strongly the necessity of very narrowly watching the motions of Monsieur Richery and his squadron.² It is very likely that you may be right in your conjecture concerning his intentions of returning into the Mediterranean; but if you should have any reason for thinking that he is gone elsewhere, you may depend upon our making every possible allowance for your acting upon the best of your judgment and discretion on the occasion; and all your proceedings hitherto perfectly justify us in placing the greatest degree of confidence in what you shall determine to do. I am sorry you thought it necessary to send the Sybille up the Mediterranean, particularly because there were some reasons of a very peculiar nature which made it desirable that she should not be on that

¹ This seems to have been the squadron which sailed under Admiral Lucas to rescue the Cape from Sir George Elphinstone and which was captured by him in Saldanha Bay. See vol. i. p. 276.

² The theatre of operations assigned to him was really Newfoundland.

station (of which reasons however you could not be apprised).¹ We have accordingly ordered her back again as soon as possible, and intend to have her fitted at Gibraltar for a particular service on her return.

I am, dear Sir, with great truth,

Your very obedient humble servant,

SPENCER.

Admiralty.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

[San Fiorenzo] 28th March, 1796.

My Lord,—On my arrival here the 23rd instant, I had the honour to receive your lordship's letters of the 16th December and 14th January by the *Boston*; and I beg leave to assure you that although little success has attended his Majesty's arms in the Mediterranean, no exertion has been wanting on the part of the officers, and I have made the best disposition I could to promote the various and extensive objects of this command. The jealousy and apprehension shown by each of his Majesty's allies in Italy of an attack from the enemy, and the fears expressed by Mr. Wyndham for the Tuscan territory, with the necessary attention to the preservation of this island, places me in a very difficult situation, much increased by the unaccountable rout of the Austrian army at Vado.²

¹ The reason was that she was a French prize irregularly captured on 17th June 1794, in the neutral port of Mykonos. See vol. i. p. 41, *note*.

² Vado, the little port south-west of Genoa, had been captured from the French by the Austrians in June 1795. It became the Austrian head-quarters and their main point of communication with Nelson's detachment. It was abandoned by them at the end of November after their defeat at Loano which is about fourteen miles west of it.

The intelligence from Toulon, confirmed by our own observations, does not admit of my detaching now the season approaches for opening the campaign ; otherwise I should place a squadron for the protection of the west side of Corsica and Sardinia ; nor can I keep the sea for any length of time, without the most imminent hazard of totally destroying the health of the people, among whom the scurvy breaks out after a cruise of six weeks in the most horrid shapes. Unfortunately there is not pasturage in this part of the island to maintain the Tuscan cattle, which prevents the agent victualler from providing any quantity beforehand.

With respect to Ajaccio, the remoteness of its situation from this bay and the capital of the island, forms, in my judgment, the principal objection to it ; and all the establishments, both of the army and navy, receiving their supplies from Leghorn, a number of transports and cruisers are required to furnish them ; the more so, because from the impracticability of the communications by land, the relief of the troops in garrison on the coast, the conveyance of ammunition baggage and stores, is all performed by ships. I did not go ashore at Leghorn, nor have I in any instance given encouragement to the interests and views of the merchants there. At the same time I have found it necessary to observe a little management towards them, as we derive all our sources from them. I trust the conduct of Vice-Admiral Waldegrave will be approved ; the peril his person and that of the Consul, his family, and the other British subjects stood in, made the departure from his instructions in delivering up the Tunisians absolutely necessary ;

and I have great pleasure in assuring you the Viceroy is perfectly satisfied with it, and every part of the transaction.¹ Circumstanced as we now are, any further advances to the Bey of Tunis would, in our opinions, be very improper, until we receive instructions. In the meanwhile I think it necessary to station cruisers between the Island of Sardinia and the Tunisian territory, to protect our trade in that much-frequented channel. The interruption of the corn trade carried on between Tunis and Marseilles, being one of the principal grievances complained of by the Bey, permit me to submit to your lordship, whether it is an object of sufficient importance to stand in the way of restoring harmony, now that the enemy, from the Austrians having abandoned the coast of Genoa, can convey corn from that republic coastwise with impunity.

The Viceroy having expressed a desire to purchase the *Postillon* corvette, to fulfil Mr. North's engagement with the Dey of Algiers, I propose to send her to Ajaccio, with the *Nemesis* and *Sardine*, and to give directions to Commissioner Coffin to paint and patch her for the occasion. Should my relation Captain Preston arrive in time, I mean to appoint him to the *Nemesis*, Mr. Halliday to his sloop, and Mr. Killwick of the *Saturn* to the *Sardine*. The number of officers represented as fit objects for invaliding distresses me much. I have given Dr. Harness strict orders upon the subject, and I have every reason to believe he attends to them with precision, for he appears to be a skilful

¹ Waldegrave had been detached with a powerful squadron to Tunis to rescue the *Nemesis* which he successfully cut out with his boats on 9th March. Her escort, the *Sardine*, was also captured.

physician, a diligent and conscientious man. The case of Lieutenant Campbell of the *Barfleur*, an officer of great merit, now under examination, is of a very serious nature indeed, and I fear has no remedy afloat.

The Viceroy is impatient for a decision about the purchase of a circuit of land in the neighbourhood of Fornali.¹ Captain Lakin carries the plan of it, and the sooner I receive orders upon the subject the better, that no time may be lost in forming the reservoir and aqueduct.

Captain Nelson, whose merits are well known to your lordship, is very ambitious of becoming a flag-officer, which does him the greatest credit, because of his having the Marines.² Should the event happen, he is also very desirous to hoist his flag in the Mediterranean. As he will hold a very important trust during the ensuing campaign, I hope you will not disapprove my giving him an order to wear a distinguishing pendant. Of Captain Troubridge I cannot speak too highly, every circumstance of his mission proving him to be an officer of considerable ability and animation, and I should do great injustice to his predecessor Captain Hood if I failed to make the same representation in favour of his conduct.

I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect,

Your lordship's most obedient

humble servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, San Fiorenzo Bay.

¹ MS. 'Torneilli.' The Torre di Fornali was in the inner part of San Fiorenzo, opposite the town.

² The promotion of 1st June 1795, had left Nelson seventh on the list of captains, but he was awarded for his services one of the four sinecure Colonelcies of Marines, the pay of which he would forfeit on taking flag rank.

MAN TO SPENCER

21st April, 1796.

My Lord,—I trust your lordship will approve of my having sent the *Resolution* home ; although the information she brings is rather of a distant date, yet you may not have heard of it by any earlier means, and the cutter's arrival just before I received Mr. Duff's letter pointed her out as the most speedy mode I could take, though I have also wrote by the way of Lisbon. To comment on the supposed destination of the squadron alluded to, there seems no doubt of their being as represented off the Western Islands, at that time, and they may have been out the time as mentioned. If this be true, it is most likely they are on a cruise, and it is also very probable from the reports that have been some time in circulation at Cadiz—this is, the reinforcement Monsieur Richery has expected—most people suppose he has had something of this kind in view, or he would not have remained with all his force inactive so long, and his putting forward now seems in a degree to confirm it. The *Victoire* was certainly intended some time ago not to have been brought forward for sea (being found very weak and leaky).¹ Now she is, and yet not thought fit for any length of voyage. This, with the preparations at Toulon, and every report and opinion I can collect, seems to indicate their intentions of going that way rather in preference to the northward ; but really it is hard to judge upon. All is chance, and I have only to wish to see him on his passage, be it where it will. If that unfortunately should not happen, I must try for information at Gibraltar,

¹ The *Victoire* (80) was Richery's flagship.

and act accordingly. At present, I cannot help declaring, I feel in the most embarrassed state a man can well be placed in. I beg your pardon, my Lord, for thus expressing myself. I wish to do right, though feel excessive difficulties arise in the wished for performance, but I shall strive to act in the best manner for his Majesty's service, and in the hope of its proving so, I must rest. My having ordered Lieutenant Colombine to proceed express with my letter, I hope will not be disapproved of, thinking no time should be lost in conveying the information, in case your lordship should find it necessary to send any additional force this way, as also for any other purpose it may be found serviceable. I take the liberty of recommending Lieutenant Colombine's assiduity and attention since he has served with me; and although the Resolution cutter has been for some time past in but a very weak state of repair, he has performed every service with great dispatch and alacrity, and I am happy in having it in my power to speak of his merit to your lordship as a very deserving good officer, and hope to recommend him to your lordship's protection.

I have the honour to remain,

Your lordship's most obedient and
very humble servant,

R. MAN.

Windsor Castle, off Cadiz.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

18th May, 1796.

My Lord,—The loss of Vado, which happened before my arrival in these parts, and the more unfortunate events of the present campaign, pass

my understanding.¹ Your lordship will be aware how precarious the supplies for Corsica and the fleet may become in consequence. The Consul and factory of Leghorn are already alarmed for the safety of their persons and property, but I trust the Emperor will furnish General Beaulieu with sufficient means to stop the further progress of the enemy.² Besides the invalided seamen which go home in a transport, there is a number of objects in the fleet totally unfit for service. Conceiving however that it was necessary to stop the rage for invaliding, I have resisted applications on this head. Should the war continue the Board will no doubt see the necessity of sending out young, healthy able-bodied landsmen to complete our numbers. I observe with concern that the *Goliath's* weekly accounts, sent from Gibraltar, state her forty-five short of complement. The few men we have got from French prisons have brought disease into the fleet, and contributed to fill the hospitals. This resource, bad as it is, no longer exists, the Commissary at Toulon having lately informed the Viceroy he has no more prisoners, seamen or soldiers to send. We make no figure in recruiting mariners from the detachments of troops serving in the fleet. By some mismanagement the 69th Regiment (by far the strongest corps we have, and most inclined to enlist) is not mentioned in the order one way or the other ; the prevailing opinion is that the omission has arisen from some dexterity of General Cuyler, the Colonel.³ I have sent Vice-

¹ See *ante*, p. 9, note.

² General Beaulieu was Austrian commander-in-chief in North Italy.

³ A battalion of the 69th were serving in the Mediterranean fleet as marines. It was the men of this regiment who so highly distinguished themselves at St. Vincent in boarding the *San*

Admiral Waldegrave with the *Barfleur*, *Princess Royal*, *St. George* and *Gibraltar* to Ajaccio, with three transports for water, the consumption of which I dare not limit for fear of sickness. The scorbutic ulcers increase, although we have had two supplies of cattle from Leghorn and have been only five weeks at sea.

The merit of Lieutenant Gibson¹ of the *Fox* armed cutter claims my acknowledgement; Sir Hyde Parker will state to your lordship the services he performed under my predecessors, which I hope will be found deserving of an Admiralty Commission.

I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect,

Your lordship's most faithful and
obedient humble servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, off Toulon.

MAN TO SPENCER

23rd June, 1796.

My Lord,—I have the honour of your two letters of the 25th March and 20th April, and am sorry to acquaint you Mr. Parry is obliged to return to his ship, the other surgeon returning from the hospital. I thank your lordship for the opinion you are pleased to express of my conduct hitherto, and trust my present application to the Admiralty will not make me forfeit it. I can assure you, my Lord, the anxiety I have

Nicolas from the Captain. There were two other regiments, the 10th and 30th (Fortescue, *British Army*, IV. 1. 116, *note*). The idea of troops in the fleet enlisting as seamen was in line with the original purpose of the marines.

¹ John Gibson, killed at Santa Cruz.

suffered since on this service has reduced me to the necessity of making my case known. I have already done my duty to the utmost of my abilities, but am now so much reduced as to make a change absolutely necessary. God forbid, that a character which I have strove to support for so many years should be hurt by an unavoidable misfortune; but even that I must give way to, rather than my country should want those abilities, which I am sorry to say, I do not possess at present. I will do my best, as long as I remain, and hope not to forfeit what I have been so long striving to obtain.

It is not thought at Cadiz that Monsieur Richery's squadron is bound foreign; Mr. Duff's last information of the 13th May says Brest or Toulon, the latter in preference. God knows. But he has been so long proceeding anywhere, that most people seem now puzzled at conjecture. If he puts to sea before the arrival of the Brazil fleet, I think this is a likely object for his attention,¹ and yet, one might suppose, if it was so, he would have gone before this. Your lordship is acquainted with the continuance of the force Spain keeps up at Cadiz; I forward an account of the shipping Mr. Duff sent me, to which I have added the number of flags we saw flying when last off the port. The manœuvring cruise, which Don Langara² is expected to proceed on soon, will rather incommode us, should Monsieur Richery not depart, and I own it will be an embarrassing circumstance should we all meet together. The peculiar complexion of the times makes me almost wish to be well to windward to observe their

¹ See vol i. p. 259 and *ante*, p. 14.

² Don Juan de Langara, commander-in-chief of the main or 'Ocean' squadron at Cadiz.

intentions first; for should the Spaniards and French be nearly connected to each other, I shall think they are perfectly so. On the other hand, as the one are supposed to be cruising for the purpose mentioned, we shall soon see by the disposition of the other what they mean; but I hope a short time will clear all doubts, though the expected treasure may keep the certainty backward until its arrival. I must wait patiently the event of the moment and have told Sir John Jervis, that if any strong marks are shown about Gibraltar of increasing the enemy's works such as to induce the General to ascertain they mean hostile, I shall push if possible to join him;¹ and in this idea I hope your lordship concurs; for separated as we are, we may both suffer. I am very sorry I have not some directions respecting the trade that has long been waiting here for convoy, and hope some will soon arrive from the commander-in-chief for the purpose of their proceeding homeward. I have wrote a long letter and am much fatigued, therefore hope for your lordship's indulgence, and trust that on your lordship's reporting my request to his Majesty, you will be pleased to place it in a favourable light; for though I am unfortunate, I can assure you I am, and ever have been, a faithful servant, and hope on recovery to be again enabled to prove my duty to the best of sovereigns.

I have the honour to remain,

Your lordship's most obedient

humble servant,

R. MAN.

Windsor Castle, Gibraltar Bay.

¹ *I.e.* Sir John Jervis, not General O'Hara.

MAN TO SPENCER

2nd July, 1796.

My Lord,—Although I did myself the honour of addressing your lordship on the 23rd ultimo, I cannot help troubling you on the present. For notwithstanding I have truly stated my situation in my letter to your lordship, yet I am willing to sacrifice everything with respect to myself rather than it should be supposed that I wish to sever myself from service. Indeed, my Lord, I have not or ever had such a thought ; it is my anxiety to do right that destroys me, and this continual harass has done me great injury ; but I trust that time may yet relieve me ; and should your lordship find any difficulty in granting my request, I submit to your decision with resignation and patience. The enemy were in port the day before yesterday, without appearance of an intention of moving ; 'tis strange conduct and we may be led to think there must be some extraordinary reason for so long a delay, or their plans not fully arranged. Some people think they are waiting for the decision of Spain with respect to England ; however I only speak of this, my Lord, as the report of the day. Things look oddly, and if Mr. Consul Wilkie's report of Admiral Mazarredo's¹ fleet (which I forward to your lordship) coming from Carthagená to join Admiral Langara, should prove as he suspects, I shall then really think they have no good intentions towards us. Should anything of the kind I hint at really take place, this squadron most likely will be the first object,

¹ Don José de Mazarredo, general of the squadron of the Department of Cadiz, was regarded as the most experienced seaman in the Spanish service.

and as the Windsor Castle sails extremely heavy, we have no chance of escaping ; but she shall be dearly carried if they attempt to stop her, I can assure your Lordship ; and as I have every probable certainty of Governor O'Hara's obtaining the earliest information of what passes, he will forward me such as is necessary, and I must guide myself accordingly. I have only to hope the blow will not come before the word. I should not have ordered Captain Bulteel¹ to proceed with the convoy had I not been much pressed by the commanders of the trade, stating the great losses they were likely to suffer from longer detention ; they are very rich, and I most sincerely hope to hear of their safe arrival.

I have the honour to be,

Your lordship's most obedient

humble servant,

R. MAN.

Windsor Castle, Gibraltar Bay.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

5th July, 1796.

My Lord,—As I apprehended and informed your lordship in my last by Mr. Fonnereau, Mr. Faulkner is dismissed his Majesty's service. A very strong representation in his favour from the Court goes with the sentence to the Board ; and I entreat your consideration of the circumstances I stand in relative to his late excellent brother, as a justification of my letter which accompanies the other.

Should the accounts I have lately received from Mr. Drake of a powerful reinforcement

¹ Capt. R. Bulteel of the *Castor*. He went home in company with the great convoy under Linzee. See *post*, p. 35, *note*.

being on its march to join General Alvintzy's army prove true,¹ and the intelligence from Commodore Nelson seems to confirm it, Bonaparte will pay dear for his temerity ; and I have no doubt the factory will soon be restored to their houses in Leghorn.² The enemy is kept in great agitation at Toulon, the manner in which we make free with the shore creating the strongest suspicion that the Royalists are in concert with me, and that I am to be put into possession of Toulon ; and the orders lately given at San Fiorenzo to provide transports for the reception of 6,000 troops has contributed to rivet the suspicion universally.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,
 Your lordship's very faithful
 and obedient servant,
 J. JERVIS.

Victory, off the Island of Hyères.

We have had a gale of wind during the last three days, without an accident.

MAN TO SPENCER

12th July, 1796.

My Lord,—By the Penelope cutter, who joined me on the 5th instant, I had the honour of receiving your letter of the 20th ultimo from Bath,

¹ Mr. Francis Drake, British Minister at Genoa. General Baron Nicholas de Alvintzy, made commander-in-chief later in the year in succession to Marshal Wurmser.

² Bonaparte had taken up the Italian command in March ; he had won the battle of Lodi in May, and in June had made a dash at Leghorn, driven out the English factory, and confiscated their property. The bulk of the merchants' goods and the naval stores were saved by Capt. Freemantle and his division.

and beg to express the great sense I entertain by your lordship, and the rest of his Majesty's Ministers' approbation of the proceedings of the squadron under my command ; and I hope by an unremitting assiduity on my part of acting to the best of my judgment, while I have the honour of remaining with it, we still continue to hold the same approbation. As I never mean, my Lord, to arrogate to myself what I feel I have not any right to, I must say I never sent the public message into Cadiz which the prints I see have given me ; though I certainly wrote to the Council on the 10th May, 'that in case the French squadron came out with the Spanish fleet, I should strive to get between them, meaning not to give umbrage to our friends in the least degree, but that I could not suffer the enemy to pass me, while I have the power to stop them.' This was what I wrote and what I meant, and am happy to find your lordship approves ; but from the extract of Captain Pierrepont's letter,¹ which I have the honour to enclose, and the present appearance of things in this neighbourhood, there is but too much reason to suppose, that should I hear they are to come out together, it will be intended purposely for protection ; and therefore it will be my business (unless I had sufficient force) to consider whether it will not be more beneficial to his Majesty's service that I should form a junction with the commander-in-chief, by which such a force may enable him to act as he may see best ; for at present neither of us could long withstand their superiority, separated as we are. However, my Lord, I have only mentioned what I think at present will be the most proper mode of adoption in case

¹ Capt. William Pierrepont of the *Blonde* (32).

I should receive any certain information of an intended rupture, and most certainly the equipping of more ships does not indicate very pacific measures. I trust greatly to General O'Hara, from whom I have ever derived the greatest attention in everything conducive to the King's service; but your lordship must perceive what a very peculiar situation I am placed in. Captain Pierrepont, having seen what he relates, will be better able to describe to your lordship, should you choose to send for him, the several circumstances that have occurred since he has been at Cadiz, than I may do by letter. I shall therefore only add, that from what I learn the British at that place seem strongly of opinion there is more intention in the fitting out of Admiral Langara's fleet, than merely the purpose of a cruise for manœuvre.

I must wait in anxious solicitude for information, and have the honour to remain, my Lord,

Your lordship's most obedient

humble servant,

R. MAN.

Windsor Castle, off Cadiz.

ENCLOSURE IN ADMIRAL MAN'S, 12th JULY, 1796

Extract of a letter received from Captain Pierrepont of his Majesty's ship Blonde, dated Cadiz, 8th July, 1796.

For these two evenings past, I have rowed round the Spanish ships, and up towards the Carraccas, as late as nine o'clock. Every ship was busily employed at that hour taking in stores, cables, and anchors—I mean taking every Spanish

ship-of-the-line that was before in want of these articles—and the whole scene of Portsmouth Harbour in an armament could not carry with it more serious preparation for war. I mentioned these circumstances to the Consul, who did not seem surprised, though he could not be fully explicit on the occasion, but who does not scruple to acknowledge that there is something brewing, and the necessity of the ships leaving this bay and quickly.

The Consul in his letter to me of yesterday says : ‘ It is certainly right to have a good look out, but I am confident there is nothing immediate to be apprehended.’ The word *immediate* carries forcible expectation, I think.

JERVIS TO CARDINAL ZELUDI

On board His Majesty's ship the Victory,
off Toulon. 13th July, 1796.

Sir,—In the present alarming crisis of affairs in Italy, I have judged it expedient to dispatch three of his Britannic Majesty's corvettes, whose names are recited in the margin, for the express purpose of protecting the treasure belonging to His Holiness the Pope, and (under the particular direction of your Eminence) to convey it to Corsica, or such other place of security as you may please to appoint.¹

I request you will assure His Holiness of the happiness I feel on this occasion to testify

¹ After his success at Leghorn Bonaparte was pushing on into the Papal Territory, with the result that on 23rd June the Pope concluded a truce on condition of paying 21,000,000 francs and surrendering 500 MSS. and 100 works of art, as well as admitting French garrisons into Ancona and the ‘ Legations ’ of Bologna and Ferrara.

the high respect I entertain for his person and character, and I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect,

Your Eminence's most obedient
and humble servant,

J. JERVIS.

L'Eclair.
La Sardine.
Peterel.

The Cardinal Zeludi.

SPENCER TO MAN

13th July, 1796.

Dear Sir,—I am extremely sorry to find that your anxiety and zeal for the service has produced so very unpleasant an effect upon your health, and I assure you that no other sentiment can arise either in my mind or in that of anyone here, but great regret at our being deprived of the exertions of so good an officer on a station so interesting. You will perceive by the instructions which have been sent in consequence of your letters received to-day, that we have endeavoured to take measures which may at the same time enable you to return home in the manner most convenient to yourself, and may tend to further the service by substituting a fresh three-decker to the Windsor Castle, which ship (I suppose), from the length of time she has been out, must be in considerable want of refitting and repair. In the event of Sir Hyde Parker falling in with you off Cadiz, I hope this arrangement may be completely effected with

ease.¹ If that should not happen, the Board have done everything they could with propriety to comply with your wishes, and though in one possible contingency the measure they have adopted may not appear to provide so immediately as could have been wished for your return, it is only because there did not appear any other mode of settling it without material inconvenience to the interest of the King's service.

I do not enter into any reasonings or speculations on the subject of the intentions which may be entertained by the Spanish or French squadrons in Cadiz, as they seem to vary so much from day to day that it is very difficult, if not impossible, here to form any decided opinion on them. I conclude the homeward bound trade will have collected at Gibraltar, and very probably quitted it for England, before this reaches you, and am in hopes that the convoy under Admiral Linzee will have arrived to proceed with the other ships which you mention in your despatches.² I am sorry that Mr. Parry has been obliged to return to his former situation, but shall be obliged to you to mention him to Sir Hyde Parker, if you should not have been able to place him in some other situation similar to that he occupied in the *Saturn*.

Believe me, dear Sir, with great truth,

Your very obedient humble servant,

SPENCER.

Admiralty.

¹ Sir Hyde Parker with Rear-Admiral Bligh sailed on August 11 with the outward-bound trade for the East and West Indies, Lisbon, Mediterranean and Quebec, having under him the *Queen* (98), three two-deckers and three cruisers.

² Vice-Admiral Robert Linzee in the *Princess Royal* (98) arrived home with the Mediterranean and West Indian convoys in August.

SPENCER TO MAN

17th July, 1796.

Dear Sir,—I have nothing to add to my letter of the 13th instant written in answer to yours of the 23rd ultimo, on the same subject as that which I have received from you of the 2nd instant; I am however glad to perceive by this latter, that your short stay at Gibraltar has made some favourable alteration in your health and spirits. I have not the least doubt of your executing the very difficult trust reposed in you as well as possible; and in taking measures to relieve you from it, by the orders given to Sir Hyde Parker, you may be assured that the Board have joined with me in regret at the necessity which alone arises from the unfortunate state of your health. The orders, which I hope you will have received before this reaches you, will, I flatter myself, have in part at least relieved you from some of those difficulties to which the uncertainty of what might be intended by Spain must have subjected you; and with respect to the rest, we did not think it advisable to make any alterations in the measures you yourself planned, which, if the occasion has happened for carrying them into effect, I have no doubt you will have executed with as much advantage as the nature of your circumstances would admit.

I am, dear Sir, with great truth,

Your very faithful humble servant,

SPENCER.

Admiralty.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

18th July, 1796.

My Lord,—Ignorant as I am of the plan of the campaign in Italy, and the Austrians having been chased out of Piedmont and Lombardy by a Banditti [*sic*], any opinion I can furnish your lordship with, touching prospective events, is scarce worth offering. With respect to the fleet, I have no doubt of maintaining this position while the Viceroy can depend upon the fidelity of his Corsicans, of which he entertains more confident hopes than he did some time ago. The fertile Island of Sardinia cannot be relied on as a resource, the insurgents having come to a resolution to keep us off, and it is understood, one part of the late *Traité* with France binds the King of Sardinia to withhold supplies from thence. We are endeavouring to obtain cattle from that part of the kingdom of Naples which borders on the Pontine marshes, and the possession of Porto Ferrajo¹ is a great security to the navigation between Corsica and the Neapolitan territory; and while we are at peace with Spain we can get onions and lemons from Barcelona; in short, I see no difficulties which may not be surmounted, my mind always mounting to the situation I happen to be placed in. Should Sir Hyde Parker decline coming out, I beg I may have no more admirals, unless they are firm men. Your lordship will readily comprehend that persons holding high situations in a fleet who see everything with a jaundiced eye are a perfect nuisance; fortunately for me, Commodore Nelson and several of the

¹ Nelson had taken possession of Porto Ferrajo in Elba on July 10 without resistance.

captains of line-of-battle ships and frigates under my command are of a *trempe* that will work to anything. Captain Calder, whose zeal cannot be outdone, will I hope be considered, and placed in some advantageous employment at the winding up.¹ Mr. Wier, Surgeon (who has long followed my fortunes), and Mr. Jackson, master of the *Victory*, are men fit for anything in their line. I wish, most heartily, the former to be Physician of the Fleet, as both the public and the seamen would receive great benefit thereby.

I have the honour to be, with the truest respect,

Your lordship's very faithful

and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, off Toulon.

As the enemy advances in the equipment of his whole force at Toulon, I must call in the *Captain* and *Diadem* to be nearer an equality with him. In this event I hope your lordship will authorise my putting *Commodore Nelson* into a frigate with a captain under him. Captain *Hotham* has declined the command of *La Minerve*, and I have appointed Captain *Cockburn* to her,² and ordered Captain *Ogle* down to *Gibraltar* in the *Meleager* to get her copper and other defects repaired.

Mr. Gregory brought me a private letter for Captain *Duckworth*, with your lordship's name to the superscription, which I do not return, conceiving, as Captain *Duckworth* is attached

¹ Capt. (afterwards Sir Robert) Calder was Captain of the Fleet.

² Afterwards Admiral Sir George Cockburn, K.C.B. He had been commanding the *Meleager*. Capt. Charles Ogle had had the *Peterel* (16).

to me from the protection I have given him, the Leviathan may be intended to join me from the West Indies.¹

MAN TO SPENCER

25th July, 1796.

My Lord,—My public letter, with its accompanying extracts, will, I hope, satisfactorily explain and obtain me your lordship's approbation, as to my intentions with respect to the disposition of his Majesty's squadron ; for indeed, my Lord, our situation, after the information from Mr. Duff, and corroborated by so many other circumstances, leaves little doubt as to the intentions of our neighbours, whenever it suits them to put them in execution ; and although some little time ago I thought they were only intending a fleet for observation or exercise, yet their present increased force, their various conferences, Monsieur Richery admitted, with the opinion from high authority of the great reason there is to suppose they mean to act hostilely whenever they do come out, directs me that it is my duty to avoid them ; for, as it is most likely, they will come out with an easterly wind, and should they get between the Straits mouth and this squadron, I must be cut off from the Mediterranean, and can have no hope of joining Sir John Jervis—which I trust your lordship will think is necessary for the hoped-for preservation of the whole of our friends in the Mediterranean, at least on the Island of Corsica. It is on this account that, as they seem to be drawing so near to the time of sailing

¹ See vol. i. pp. 285–94.

(for Admiral Langara is embarked, and they are said to be ready, though not perhaps quite full manned), I think no time should be lost. Therefore as soon as I get our water and provisions complete at Gibraltar, it is my intention, (unless anything intervenes to cause me to alter it) to proceed off Toulon, or to Fiorenzo Bay, in search of the fleet. That junction once effected, I trust Sir John will be able to withstand any force the enemy may bring against him. Twenty-two ships-of-the-line, six of them three-deckers, is a strong force and not easily got the better of; but a division of seven being disposed of, the others may find it difficult to secure themselves from a large fleet. I beg your pardon, my Lord, I only mention this as an opinion, and as a reason for what I am about to do, trusting to the rectitude of my intentions, and my hope that my conduct will be approved. It is true I leave Monsieur Richery behind me, but when it is considered the force of the Spanish fleet must prevent my hindering him (even if they were only as cruisers off their own port without hostile intentions) from getting out,—I hope, though it is unfortunate for me, yet it will not be imputable as a fault.

Vice-Admiral Solano¹ is said to command the squadron of eight sail-of-the-line with some frigates going to the Havannah, but the destination of Monsieur Richery I never have been able to learn, beyond what I have transmitted to the Board, the last account of the 13th May. Mr. Duff seems confident they were intended for some port in France, either Toulon or Brest.

¹ Don José Solano, Marqués del Socorro, in the original Spanish war plan, was destined for the protection of South America with seven of the line and four frigates. *Duro*, xiii. 59.

The Consul informs me of two Spanish corvettes of twenty guns being to sail in the course of this week with sealed orders, but have only two months' provisions, so what service they may be intended for is difficult to say. Lord Hugh Seymour will relate to your lordship, I have no doubt, the plan which was suggested, when I had the honour of seeing him.¹ I can only say the purport of the Consul's letter was not then known to us, nor did I suspect there was quite so near a certainty of Spain entering into the views of our enemy as there now appears.

Whatever may have been your lordship's intention with respect to my private application, I can only beg leave to refer you to Lord Hugh, who knows my situation. I shall cheerfully submit to whatever your lordship may determine on, and have the honour to subscribe myself,

Your lordship's much obliged
and very humble servant,
R. MAN.

Windsor Castle, off Cadiz.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

27th July, 1796.

My Lord,—I have commissioned Captain Woodhouse for the *Peterel*, and Lieutenant Clark goes down to Gibraltar in the *Mutine* cutter to succeed him in *La Aurora*, I must confess much against my conscience when there are six or seven lieutenants in this ship and some in others of the

¹ Rear-Admiral Lord Hugh Seymour was at this time second-in-command of a division of the Channel Fleet, but early in May he had been detached to receive and see safely into the Tagus a rich homeward-bound Brazil convoy. See vol. i. pp. 259–61.

fleet of good service, distinguished merit and ability. Mr. Henry Heathcote, son of Sir William, goes into the *Britannia* *vice* Clark, and I have appointed Messrs. Archibald and Shephard to the *Gorgon* in lieu of her two lieutenants, who, after lingering some time in Ajaccio Hospital, were invalided by survey without my knowledge or participation ; but I believe very properly, the venereal poison having got such hold of their blood, it could not be eradicated. This was the case with Lord Hervey, and I fear many of the young men of the fleet are in the same state, owing to too much sexual latitude in Leghorn before I took the command. Poor Admiral Man has been afflicted with such a distempered mind, during the last nine months, that imaginary ills and difficulties have been continually brooding in it, when in fact he has never had a real one ; and but for this dreadful malady the *Castor* and *Blonde* had been careened and the line-of-battle ships thoroughly caulked and refitted, while he lay in Gibraltar Bay, or the latter at sea ; for I am now in a progress of caulking every ship here ; and he might have anchored before the Bay of Cadiz, without the limits of the port, and received his water and refreshments at will ; but when the Blue Devils prevail, there is an end of resource and energy. You see, my Lord, how very few men are fit to command. Looking over the list of admirals with an impartial eye, I cannot find many men on it qualified to command ten line-of-battle ships on critical service. Commodore Nelson is an excellent partisan, and Captain Frederick would make a good admiral of division.¹ I sincerely lament that

¹ Capt. Thos. Lennox Frederick of the *Illustrious* had done very well in Lord Hotham's action.

Captain Troubridge is so low on the list of captains, for he is capable of commanding the fleet of England, and I scarce know another, when Lord Howe is gone, and he cannot last for ever. Pardon these reveries, and permit me to assure your lordship that I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Your very faithful and obedient servant,
J. JERVIS.

Victory, off Toulon.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

CONFIDENTIAL.

29th July, 1796.

My Lord,—Vice-Admiral Waldegrave is so very troublesome to me, that I must request of your lordship to remove him to some other service. Besides being exigent to a degree I cannot permit, he writes me volumes from the *Barfleur* to the *Victory* upon trifles light as air, when I have so much correspondence of an urgent nature that although I rise at two o'clock in the morning the day is not sufficiently long to perform it.

I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect,

Your lordship's very faithful,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, off Toulon.

ADMIRAL WALDEGRAVE TO EARL SPENCER

31st July, 1796.

My Lord,—'Tis not my wish to worry and perplex your lordship with my sufferings, and yet how difficult a task is it for a man possessing

a nice sense of honour and strong feelings, to remain silent, situated as I now find myself. What must I at this moment appear to him under whose command I now am so unfortunately placed? A mere slave, a base hireling, who has sold himself as 'a Spy upon his actions,' in short, my Lord, a man devoid of every principle of honour. And yet, my Lord, with whom am I supposed to be leagued? But this perhaps was too gross to name, my only correspondents being (a few chance letters excepted) your lordship and the Under-Secretary of State, both very natural and convenient vehicles to the Cabinet, it must be granted. I have at least however the honour and satisfaction to find myself in good company, which at all events is some comfort. In truth, my Lord, if my own understanding and judgement do not deceive me, this strange attack upon me is not of a very flattering nature to your Lordship, as you yourself seem to run some risk of being considered as a suborner in this dark plot. Pardon me, my Lord, for thus tormenting you on this hateful subject, but the more my mind dwells upon it, the more it is stung, and the more it becomes bewildered. Do, my Lord, however but for one moment place yourself in my situation, and then you will, perhaps, in some degree be enabled to judge of the excruciating torture of mind I suffer, and must continue to suffer, till I receive your lordship's kind assurance that my wishes respecting my removal from hence, shall be as speedily as possible complied with. I have only one thing more to add, my Lord, and then I have done—and this is, that Captain Calder expressed his concern to Captain Dacres¹ of the rupture that

¹ Waldegrave's flag-captain.

had taken place between the Commander in Chief and myself. Now as the Admiral had told Captain C. that he had written to Lord S. for my removal from the Mediterranean, is it not natural to suppose, that he must at the same time have assigned his reasons for having taken so violent and (I should hope) so unprecedented a step? Should this have been the case I leave your lordship to judge what effects such an insinuation must produce on the minds of officers of the Fleet. When I make use of the word *insinuation* the term is surely not *too strong*, when compared with the *charge*, as this in fact pretty plainly asserts, that either Ministers, or at least an Under-Secretary of State, is employing 'a Spy on the Commander in Chief's actions' as the charge surely means this, if it means anything. I ask, my Lord, on this supposition, what reliance can officers place in such Ministers? and on the other hand, what confidence can Ministers place in such a Commander in Chief? Had the Admiral thought proper to have explained himself fully by Captain Dacres, or even afterwards by letter, the point would have been clear, but this he thought proper to decline, for reasons best known to himself.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your lordship's much obliged
humble servant,

WM. WALDEGRAVE.

Off Toulon.

P.S.—August 1st. If your lordship can annex any other idea to this most unofficer-like and, I must add, infamous accusation that has been laid against me, you will not only relieve my mind

greatly by stating it, but perhaps check a matter of more serious consequence.

May I request the favour of your lordship to let the enclosed letter to my friend M^r Stephens be safely delivered, it being of much consequence to me.¹

JERVIS TO SPENCER

1st August, 1796.

My Lord,—Since my letter of the 29th of July events have happened respecting V.-Adm. Waldegrave which make his removal from the fleet absolutely necessary for the good of His Majesty's service and my safety at the head of it. I therefore entreat he may be ordered home with the next convoy. . . .

I have [&c.],
J. JERVIS.²

JERVIS TO SPENCER

11th August, 1796.

My Lord,—The lowering aspect of Spain, with the advanced state of the equipment of the French fleet in Toulon, has impelled me to compress my forces, and I have carried into effect the intention I had the honour to hint to your lordship in my letter of the 18th July, by ordering Commodore Nelson to hoist his broad pendant on board such frigate or sloop under his orders

¹ There are several other letters from Waldegrave to the same effect, but Lord Spencer wrote him a soothing reply, and he did not leave the fleet till after the battle of St. Vincent.

² The meaning of this letter seems to be that Jervis had issued an order that no letters were to be sent direct to the ship going home with the mail; all were to go to the flagship; and against this order Waldegrave wrote him a somewhat intemperate protest.

as he may from time to time see fit. Captain Stuart (lately appointed to La Mignonne) has an order to command the Captain.¹

I have the honour to be, with great respect,
Your lordship's very faithful
and obedient servant,
J. JERVIS.

Victory, off Toulon.

JERVIS TO SPENCER²

August 1796.

My Lord,—The precipitation with which Rear-Admiral Man abandoned his position before Cadiz may have serious consequences, for he came up very bare of provisions, and we do not abound;³ and I fear the advices he sent to the coast of Portugal may tend to impede the passage of the supplies coming out. In the meanwhile I have directed the agent victualler at Gibraltar to send me all the provisions from thence he can spare. Affairs in Corsica are approaching their crisis, and I fear the Viceroy, for whom I have the greatest respect, has been very much deceived by the party he has espoused; Porto Ferrajo is an easy transfer, and I conclude it will end in removing the troops, stores, &c., thither.⁴ From the enclosed your lordship will perceive how

¹ Capt. Charles Stuart; but the Captain was given to Miller. See *post*, p. 48. He did, however, command the Captain for a time, when Miller was in the Diadem.

² Undated duplicate (see *post*, p. 65) endorsed 'August, received October 11.' The letter of 11th August was received 29th September.

³ See note, *post*, p. 49.

⁴ From Leghorn Bonaparte had sent a mission to Corsica to rouse the island against the British Protectorate, and already Elliot was contemplating having to retire the garrison to Elba.

very unfit the ablest of the Corps Diplomatique are to negotiate with barbarians, and that strong nerves and manly sense are superior to the art and finesse of the European mode of treating. I am of opinion that before I quit the Mediterranean, it will be highly proper for me to visit the Regents of Tripoli, Tunis and Algiers, accompanied by a respectable squadron, in order to leave a lasting impression on the minds of these people of the vigour of our character, and the decided pre-eminence we have over all other maritime Powers, in skill, discipline and subordination ; for I can now with confidence assure your lordship that this fleet, which when I took the command of it was piteous with respect to the two latter attributes, is shaping fast into a very complete system. Captain Miller¹ has answered the description given of him by all the officers of character here, and has raised the minds of the people at Trieste from abject despair to perfect confidence ; and I have no doubt but Captain Tyler,² and the other two captains of his little squadron, who are valuable officers, will acquit themselves to my entire satisfaction.

I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect,

Your lordship's most faithful and
obedient humble servant,

J. JERVIS.

¹ Capt. Ralph Willett Miller, who was born in New York, was one of the most promising officers in the service. Jervis had promoted him to the command of the *Unité* and sent him with three other cruisers to the head of the Adriatic to protect the Austrian communications. When Nelson in August received his broad pennant he chose Miller for his flag-captain. He lost his life before Acre in 1799 when the *Theseus* was burnt, aged only thirty-seven. *Naval Chron.* ii. 581. His monument is in St. Paul's.

² Afterwards Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Tyler, G.C.B. When Miller joined Nelson he succeeded to the command in the Adriatic.

SPENCER TO MAN

24th August, 1796.

Dear Sir,—Though much pressed by a variety of important business at this moment, I cannot suffer the present despatches to depart to the Mediterranean fleet without writing a word to you in acknowledgment of your letter of the 25th July, previous to your quitting your station off Cadiz.¹ I hope my former letters may have reached you, in which I have repeatedly endeavoured to express the sense I entertain of your conduct on that station, and to remove from your mind any possible doubt of your proceedings being looked upon here in the light in which they so eminently deserve to be considered. I have now great pleasure in adding that though it is impossible in a general point of view that we should not lament the occasion which has placed you under the necessity of quitting the station in order to rejoin the Mediterranean fleet, your having done so meets with the full approbation of all those who are best qualified to judge on the subject. I hope that the relaxation which your change of situation will allow you may be conducive to the restoration of your health, so as to enable you without any intermission to continue those exertions in his Majesty's service, which has already so justly merited his approbation, and which from the circumstances

¹ On 4th August though war with Spain was not yet declared, De Langara put to sea with twenty-six of the line and fourteen frigates to escort Richery's squadron clear on its way to the Newfoundland Banks. Man in accordance with his decision already mentioned withdrew on 29th July to join Jervis, but without replenishing his stores at Gibraltar.

of the times are likely to be as much wanted now, as ever they have been.

Believe me, dear Sir, with great truth,
Your very faithful humble servant,
SPENCER.

Admiralty.

MAN TO SPENCER

30th August, 1796.

My Lord,—I yesterday had the honour of receiving your lordship's letter of the 13th July, and beg to acknowledge my grateful thanks for your condescension in granting my request for returning to England for the recovery of my health ; and more so for the very handsome manner in which your lordship and the Admiralty Board have been pleased to arrange it for my convenience in ordering the Windsor Castle's return. My several letters of the 2nd, 14th, and 25th ultimo, to your lordship and also to the Admiralty, will I trust have reached your hands, by which you will be informed of the several circumstances (particularly the last) which led me to proceed up the Mediterranean to join Sir John Jervis ; and I am so far happy in saying, that on my effecting it on the 20th instant, I received his entire approbation for having done so ; and I have only to hope I shall be equally fortunate in obtaining that of your lordship and the Admiralty Board. My being ordered down again so soon, may perhaps appear otherwise in the eyes of the world ;¹ if so, I can only lament that it should fall to my lot, as I am conscious

¹ Jervis had to order Man back to Gibraltar because he had come on without having filled up his ships.

I acted for the best for his Majesty's service ; and as the enemy's squadron, there is no doubt, put to sea with the Spanish fleet, I cannot help thinking but they meant to protect them ; and at this moment it is a very doubtful point with me whether our passage to Gibraltar may not be impeded. However, ere this reaches your lordship, that must be ascertained. Should it be fortunate enough to succeed, its accompanying despatches from Sir John Jervis will fully explain the circumstances relative to this squadron. I need not therefore trouble your lordship with a recapitulation.

Your lordship does me great honour in the interest you are pleased to express for my health. At the time I troubled the Board I was very ill ; but I thank God I am now better, and have the honour to subscribe myself,

Your lordship's much obliged
and very faithful humble servant,
R. MAN.

Windsor Castle, San Fiorenzo Bay.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

3rd September, 1796.

My Lord,—Should the accounts of an embarkation at Brest be true, I beg leave to point the Tagus out as the probable real object of the enterprise ; for while they make demonstration of a descent in Ireland from Britany and on the north coast from Holland, they may by stealing a march possess themselves of Lisbon, from whence it will be very difficult to drive them out ;¹

¹ This was Hoche's expedition to Ireland. The fear that it was intended for Lisbon was one of the reasons why it was not intercepted by the Channel Fleet. See vol. i. pt. vii.

especially if they enter Portugal with an army through Spain, as Lord Bute seems confident they will, the moment the heats are over.¹ I have sent a despatch to his lordship by the Fox cutter with a hint of my jealousy of the Tagus, and requested he will convey it to England.

Captain Woodhouse came up in the Camelion, and will be my guest until I can convey him to the Peterel, now become a difficult operation, from the manner in which the French have taken post in the Venetian and Papal territory, and I have at present no conveyance by sea.

Your lordship's very faithful
and obedient servant,
J. JERVIS.

Victory, off Toulon.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

15th September, 1796.

My Lord,—I am honoured with your two letters of the 22nd July and 8th August. Hitherto we have had no occasion to [*illegible from damp*] coast for refreshments. By the accounts I receive from Prince Augustus² and Sir William Hamilton, it is evident the moment the peace is signed between France and Naples, there is an end of our resources in the dominions of his Sicilian Majesty; in the meanwhile the Viceroy and I are drawing all we can from that quarter. The difficulty with respect to Barbary is the bad anchorage in the winter months, and the strong escorts of frigates which the victuallers will require, and I have not

¹ John, first Marquis of Bute, was Ambassador in Madrid.

² Prince Augustus Frederick, afterwards Duke of Sussex, the King's radical son, was residing in Italy for his health.

to give ; for when the season of blockade is over, the enemy will let loose upon me from twenty to thirty frigates and corvettes, and I have very little to oppose to them, as your lordship well knows. At this critical period I ought to have a frigate stationed at every projecting point from Cartagena to the Island of Minorca, and at least four as videttes to the fleet, whereas I have not one for either of these important services. I do not complain, it being my duty to make the most of what my superiors think fit to furnish me with, and I have done so to the best of my judgment.

The captains and officers of the Dolphin hospital-ship and Alliance store-ship take great pains to repeat signals, but, as they are so thinly manned as not to be able to allot a sufficient number of seamen for the performance of this duty, of course they are slow. To remedy this in thick weather, I have directed all the line-of-battle ships that have the signal colours to repeat in the daytime.¹ My opinion always has been that every ship in the navy should be furnished with them, as is the usage in the French and Spanish navies.

I have directed Mr. Master to be conveyed to Corsica that he may confer with the Viceroy ; and afterwards to join me *en route* to Algiers, in order to give him the best sense I am master of, and to concert a plan for the supply of cattle, &c., which from the Dey's letter to me, your lordship will perceive, he is very solicitous we should be furnished with from his territory. In truth the trade is so stagnated by our operations upon the

¹ When numerary signal flags were introduced by Howe just before the war, flagships alone had complete sets. Private ships had nothing but answering flags.

coasts of Italy and Provence that he would most willingly cede it to us.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,
Your lordship's most faithful
and obedient servant,
J. JERVIS.

Victory, off Toulon.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

18th September, 1796.

My Lord,—From the report of Captain Hood, who joined in the *Zealous* this morning, the *Vigilant* gun-boat, which had been totally neglected, and used as a lighter (as, I am sorry to say, was the fine gun-boat at Gibraltar), is put into complete repair, with an addition to her keel, and rigged as a sloop. I have therefore given an order to Mr. John Ellis to command her, as a lieutenant; and he being the son of a very old officer, Lieutenant John Ellis 1st, whom I have known very many years; and the young man comes very strongly recommended from the *Goliath*, Sir Charles Knowles having brought him up, I beg leave to place him under your lordship's protection as a child of the service.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,
Your lordship's very faithful
and obedient servant,
J. JERVIS.

Victory, off Toulon.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

27th September, 1796.

My Lord,—Captain Redmill will have the honour to present you with this,¹ and I beg leave

¹ Capt. Robert Redmill in July was transferred from the *Comet* to the *Tarleton*, both fire-ships of fourteen guns.

to recommend him to your protection as an active intelligent officer. His return to the command of the *Tarleton* would have marred the appointment of Lord Proby,¹ and been of no use, as she must be annihilated.

By the *Hope* lugger I shall send the report from Commodore Nelson of the operations in the Island of Capraja, this moment received, in which Lieutenant Berry has again distinguished himself.² The enclosed letter does so much credit to him, and honour to the Commodore, I cannot resist sending it. The three senior lieutenants of the *Captain* have gone through a great deal of fire and hard service, and I am sure will not be forgotten by your lordship.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Your very faithful and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, off Toulon.

ENCLOSURE ³

Nelson to Jervis

Captain, Bastia Roads.

15th September, 1796.

Dear Sir,—The vessel which we took has on board two brass 24 pounders, about 2000 shot for these, and about 400 shells of 13 inch, with some

¹ Viscount Proby, eldest son of the first Earl Carysfort.

² In consequence of Genoa having been forced to close her ports to British ships, Nelson had been instructed to seize the island of Capraja in reprisal, which he did with troops from Bastia on 17th and 18th September. Berry, his first lieutenant, had been serving since 10th August as acting flag-captain pending Miller's arrival. See Nicolas, vii. *addenda* xcvii. Two French privateers were taken and two destroyed.

³ This letter is not included in Nicolas' collection. The prize was a bomb-vessel cut out of St. Pietro d' Arena, near Genoa, on 11th September. *Ibid.*, ii. 266, and vii. *addenda* cx.

other trifling¹ articles. I have not mentioned to you that this vessel, laying not thirty yards from four guns firing grape and a number of musquetry, reflects no small degree of credit on Lieutenants Berry and Noble for their gallant conduct as also on the two boats' crews; had not these officers and men been so much in the habit of doing handsome things, it would not probably so long have escaped my pen, unequal as it is to [do] justice to them.

Now, Sir, comes a point in which I request your decision; I do not want it so much as to a point of law as really your opinion of what is right.

Commodore Nelson by his appointment from Sir John Jervis, K.B., Commander-in-Chief of his Majesty's Fleet in the Mediterranean, shares as a junior flag-officer for all prizes taken by the fleet from 10th August, 1796. But the ship in which the Commodore has his broad pendant flying has not only no captain on board but none has yet joined; therefore the Commodore does the whole duty as captain of the ship.

N.B.—It is to be observed that the Commodore shares for all prizes taken by the fleet as a junior flag-officer.²

Question. How ought the Commodore to share for a prize taken by his Majesty's ship Captain situated as above stated.

In some respects I may be said to have a right to share as captain or *Commander* of the ship, but I rather lean to the opinion that I cannot share as a captain even under the idea of being commander of the ship, but only as a junior flag-officer having accepted the appointment of commodore.

¹ MS. 'Trifling.'

² This paragraph is erased.

If you decide that I have no right to share as captain, then I have to request that you will either give or allow me for a few days to give Lieutenant Berry an order to act as captain which will give him the prize money for this vessel; if you decide the other way I must endeavour to shew my sense of his gallantry and good conduct in other ways than my *pen*.

Believe me, dear Sir,

Your most obedient and faithful,

HORATIO NELSON.

(Received 27th September, 1796, by Sir John Jervis.)

(Received by Lord Spencer, 6th November, 1796.)

SPENCER TO JERVIS

29th September, 1796.

Dear Sir,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 11th and 17th August. I am very glad to hear that you have concentrated your force, and I have no doubt that when Admiral Man shall have joined you, which I suppose he will have done soon after the date of your last letter, that you will be equal to whatever either the French or Spaniards may attempt against you.

Believe me, dear Sir, with great truth,

Your very obedient humble servant,

SPENCER.

We have confirmed your appointment of Commodore Nelson to have a captain under him and in consequence of it have given a commission to Captain Stuart for the Captain.¹

¹ See *ante*, p. 47, note.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

2nd October, 1796.

My Lord,—Be assured I will omit no opportunity of chastising the Spaniards, and if I have the good fortune to fall in with them the stuff I have in this fleet will tell.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Your lordship's very faithful

and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, off Toulon.

MAN TO SPENCER

[Gibraltar] 9th October, 1796.

My Lord,—Having already done myself the honour of thanking you for the honour of your favour of the 18th July, I have now to add for your last favour of the 19th and your lordship's attention to my wishes, which I should have availed myself of, did not the circumstances attending the present direct me as my duty to remain in this neighbourhood while there is a probability of rendering service with the squadron; but how long the prospect of doing so will continue it is impossible to say. The enemy are greatly superior in numbers, and should they fall in with Sir John Jervis off Toulon, or find him in any of the ports of Corsica, the consequence I am afraid will be very serious, particularly in the latter case, on account of his provisions which are very low, and were there any here (whereas there is none in fact) I see not the least probability of

assisting him.¹ It would be next to an impossibility to convey a convoy up—for once seen by the enemy's fleet they must fall, and the chance of meeting him even is so much against us, that the attempt appears to me to be wrong—as the difference of time between a convoy being able to reach Corsica and the fair supposition that he must have left that country or be blockaded by superiority of numbers, appears to me to preclude a chance of joining him, without the expected convoy comes out with strong force; in which case, should I be fortunate enough to join them, I shall think it the happiest day of my life; for which reason, and the only plan I can suggest to myself at present is to proceed and cruise about Cape St. Vincent and Cape St. Maries, for about fourteen days, after the squadron is ready, which I trust will be the latter end of this week—and if I do not meet them by that time or hear of them, I must conclude they are not coming this way, in which case, or indeed in any other, except the above-mentioned, can this squadron be of use at Gibraltar? If the Upper fleet² is worsted, this squadron must fall, and

¹ After seeing Richery clear and detaching Solano with seven of the line to escort him further, De Langara returned to Cadiz, and a week before the declaration of war (which was on 8th October) he entered the Mediterranean with nineteen of the line. Falling in with Man off Cape de Gata, as he was returning from Corsica, he chased him from 1st to 3rd October, but Man escaped into Gibraltar with the loss of a brig and two transports. Langara then went back, picked seven of the line at Cartagena and declining an action with Jervis, whom he found with only fourteen of the line in San Fiorenzo Bay, went into Toulon. His object in entering the Mediterranean was apparently by arrangement with France to form a junction with the Toulon squadron before declaration of war. See next letter.

² This expression is unusual. It means presumably the fleet that is 'up the Straits' as distinguished from the division outside.

should Sir John escape them and get down this way, it is reasonable to suppose the enemy will follow with their whole force, and I must be cut off, or at least prevented joining him. I therefore know of no service I can render more conducive to the general good than by returning to England with the squadron, conceiving that I can neither assist the commander-in-chief without joining him or render any service to the garrison of Gibraltar in our present state; and should we be hemmed in by superiority of numbers those services must be lost. 'Tis really a most serious situation we are in, my Lord, and I hope you will pardon my saying so, but unless some providential circumstance happens to our relief in this country, God only knows what will be the consequence. I reckon the enemy will be at least thirty sail of Spanish, and about ten French of-the-line; the ships at Cadiz are getting forward, two are in this bay, but I believe they want men greatly; they are said to be ten in number. I trust and hope, my Lord, my intentions will be approved by your lordship and the Board; they are well meant, I declare before God, and I have not a thought but for his Majesty's service, though a very difficult task to get over.

Our escape from Admiral Langara is most fortunate, as it is now publicly declared his intentions were to have taken us—as by accounts to-day, he knew of our being on our passage.

I have the honour to subscribe myself,

Your lordship's much obliged
and very humble servant,

R. MAN.

Gibraltar Bay.

(Received Oct. 25. Answered same day.)

JERVIS TO SPENCER

23rd October, 1796.

My Lord,—Soon after the Viceroy communicated to the municipality of Bastia that the island was to be evacuated, the reins of government were wrested from him, and a committee of thirty nominated to carry it on.¹ At this moment a gale of wind at west, which rushed in violent gusts from the mountains, drove the Southampton and transports from their anchors. Upon this the committee of thirty insisted that an equal number of Corsicans should mount guard with the British, at the citadel and barriers, and refused to allow the Viceroy to send a messenger with letters to the Corsican generals in the French service at Leghorn, having determined to send delegates of their own. The instant I was apprised of this, I detached the Captain, with orders to the Egmont² (in case Captain Stuart fell in with her) to proceed to Bastia. Happily Commodore Nelson arrived there in the Diadem at the most interesting period, and by the firm tone he held, soon reduced these gentlemen to order and quiet submission to the embarkation, but wrote to me that another line-of-battle ship and a transport or two would accelerate the work much. I therefore dispatched the Excellent³ with two transports, and they had an uncommon quick passage. By the unwearied labour of Commodore Nelson and those under his command, everything was embarked on the 19th and he sailed for Porto Ferrajo at midnight.

¹ The order for Elliot to evacuate Corsica was sent off on 31st August, and reached him on 25th September. The troops were embarked for Elba on 19th October. See vol. i. p. 319.

² Capt. John Sutton.

³ Capt. Cuthbert Collingwood.

On the 20th the Spanish fleet, consisting of twenty-eight sail-of-the-line and ten frigates, was abreast of Cape Corse, evidently *en route* for Leghorn, a Danish brig with Dutch property, bound from Zante to Rotterdam, detained by the Peterel, having been in the midst of them, but was taken for a Dane, and only hailed. At five o'clock that evening the wind suddenly chopped round from north-west to north-and-by-east, and they hauled their wind on the starboard tack in great disorder. It blew hard with a great swell all night, and at two o'clock the next morning, the Inconstant and Blanche, that I had detached to observe the enemy's motions at Toulon (Captain Troubridge in the Culloden, with the Bombay Castle and Zealous having joined me per order on the 18th), were very near to them, about six leagues to the northward of Cape Rivellata.¹ The two ships separated and the Inconstant came off this bay on the 21st at noon to report. I immediately detached Captain Freemantle with letters to Colonel Wemyss at Calvi, and directed him to proceed afterwards to join Captain Curzon in the Pallas (who I had ordered to cruise from fourteen to twenty leagues west of Cape Rivellata, to look out for Rear-Admiral Man), and after informing him of the circumstances relative to the Spanish fleet, to run into Ajaccio for the same purpose, and to deliver letters to the senior sea officer and Commissioner Coffin respecting their retreat from thence.

We have every demonstration of perfidy throughout the island. Almost the whole of Major Smith's corps have deserted from transports they were embarked on board of at Bonifacio,

¹ MS. 'Revelatta.' Cape Rivellata is the N.W. point of Corsica which forms the Gulf of Calvi.

and the slaves that Mr. North redeemed at such an enormous price at Algiers robbed the person employed by Mr. Heatly, the agent-victualler to draw supplies from Sardinia, of near two hundred head of cattle. The Viceroy had many thousand men in pay as free companies. These, with almost the whole of the members of Parliament in the interest of the British Government and other pensioners, were the first to shew enmity to us. In short, I do not believe the page of history can produce an instance of such rascally business and ingratitude, for the whole island has been enriched by the generosity of our Government.

On the 22nd at daybreak Captains Troubridge and Hood, with detachments from their respective ships, disabled and chucked over the cliffs into the sea the guns and carriages of two fascine batteries *en barbette*, which had been thrown up on the heights on the east side of the bay, which command a small bay below the Pieno of Patri-
monia, inhabited by a set of infernal miscreants; the Captain has been employed in embarking a large quantity of shot and shells brought from Trieste in the Southampton, near four hundred barrels of powder and other valuable ordnance stores, and in dismantling the sea line of battery at the citadel of San Fiorenzo; and the launches of the Vice-Admiral's Division (in Mortella Bay), under the direction of Captain Giffard of La Mignonne, have embarked the cannon, carriages, platform, and ammunition from the Fornali batteries and tower.¹ The guns on Mortella Tower are also lowered down, ready for embarkation as soon as the swell abates, and the furnaces

¹ See *ante*, p. 21. Mortella Bay was in the outer part of the Gulf of San Fiorenzo on the same side as Fornali.

and bellows for heating shot removed from every quarter.

Monsieur Gentili having held out a menace that he would attack the citadel of San Fiorenzo and outposts with six thousand men and cannon from Bastia, I have conveyed to him that if a shot is fired, I will raze the town of Fiorenzo, blow up the citadel, and destroy the tank.¹ In all these operations I have the ablest assistance from Captain Mackenzie of the Royals,² who is the commandant, and a more manly, intelligent officer I never acted with; insomuch I shall be greatly obliged to your lordship to state his merits to his Royal Highness the Duke of York, with an humble request from me that he will have the goodness to lay them before his Majesty.

I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect,

Your lordship's most faithful
and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, in San Fiorenzo Bay.

SPENCER TO JERVIS

25th October, 1796.

Dear Sir,—I should long ere this have taken some measure towards effecting the object pointed out in your letters of the 29th July and the 1st August³ (the former marked confidential) had not the circumstances in which the Mediterranean

¹ General Gentili was one of the chief organisers of the anti-British movement.

² The 1st Foot.

³ Referring to his request for the recall of Admiral Waldegrave. See *ante*, pp. 43 and 46.

fleet appeared to be at the time I received them rendered it absolutely impracticable to provide for any such service as is there pointed out. In addition to the two letters above mentioned I have to acknowledge the receipt of a duplicate (without date) inclosing one from Captain Freemantle at Algiers of the 2nd August, and two letters of the 3rd September, the first relating to Mr. White of the Defence, the second on various subjects. Captain Freemantle's spirited and active conduct on all occasions cannot be too much praised, and every part of it which has come to my knowledge since I was at the Admiralty has made me very desirous of his acquaintance, and of shewing him every possible mark of attention. The squadron of frigates which you have sent to the Adriatic have been of very essential service and their presence there has been felt with great impression at Vienna ;¹ and I cannot help repeating on this occasion the strong sense which is felt here of the exertion and spirit which the character of their commander-in-chief has so successfully infused into the fleet under your orders which is highly creditable to yourself and cannot fail of producing the greatest benefit to the service in general.

The accounts we have received to-day from Admiral Man at Gibraltar² are truly alarming from the situation in which this sudden movement of the Spanish fleet must have placed you, and I cannot help extremely regretting that the slowness of communication should have prevented your receiving the orders from hence which would have probably induced you to keep his squadron with

¹ This was Capt. Tyler's squadron. See *ante*, p. 48, note.

² This was his letter of 9th October. See *ante*, p. 58.

you.¹ I feel the greatest confidence in your skill and activity and am fully persuaded that all which can be done in your present circumstances will be effected; but with so great a disparity of force as there will be, if they should be reinforced from Carthage in their passage up the Mediterranean, I see what an arduous task you will have. In this situation what is properest to be done must be left entirely to your discretion, as it is impossible here to form any well-founded judgment on what, on these dispatches reaching you, may be the relative situation of the fleet. We have at all events sent out Vice-Admiral Thompson, who is spoken of as an officer of merit and energy, and of whose junction with you I shall, I confess, have [*illegible from damp*] with the utmost possible anxiety.

Believe me [&c.],
SPENCER.

SPENCER TO MAN

25th October, 1796.

Dear Sir,—I received your letters of the 9th instant this morning, and am happy to hear that you escaped so fortunately from the very superior force you met with in your passage down from Corsica. I trust the conveyance by which this will reach you will arrive in time to prevent your coming with the squadron to England, as we conceive that you may eventually be of much more service by remaining at Gibraltar, or if possible by joining Sir John Jervis, than you could be here. As there is reason however to apprehend that your health may still be such as to make it

¹ This presumably refers to the Cabinet's decision to cancel the orders for the evacuation of Corsica. See vol. i. p. 319, *note*.

very desirable for you to return home, we have sent out Vice-Admiral Thompson,¹ whose presence at all events will be very desirable in the Mediterranean fleet, meaning to leave you at liberty to avail yourself of the permission conveyed in his instructions, or not, as you may think fit. Nothing can have been more unfortunate than your having been detached from Sir John Jervis at the juncture, though from the orders which were calculated for a very different state of things from that in which they reached you, it will have appeared a necessary measure at the time ; as it is, however, we give you credit for having acted for the best at the moment, and I trust some fortunate circumstance may ensue to put things on a better footing than your letters left them.

Believe me, dear Sir,

Your very obedient humble servant,

SPENCER.

Admiralty.

I have also to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th August from San Fiorenzo Bay.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

26th October, 1796.

My Lord,—The Citadel of San Fiorenzo was evacuated on the night of the 23rd without the smallest accident, although the enemy to the amount of four thousand had surrounded the work and town. The Tower of Fornali was blown

¹ Charles Thompson had been promoted vice-admiral on 1st June and had been commanding the squadron watching Brest. See vol. i. p. 364. He was second-in-command at St. Vincent. His instructions were to take over the command from Man, if Man wished to come home.

up and completely destroyed by Captain Hood of the *Zealous* the instant the boats put off with the garrison of San Fiorenzo ; and the following morning I moved the squadron into Mortella Bay ; and the Viceroy arrived in the *Captain*, with whom I have arranged our future operations.

The garrison of Calvi arrived yesterday, but from Colonel Wemyss, the Commandant, not having received his orders in time many of the ordnance stores are left behind, and too much powder. This is the more vexatious because I sent two commodious store-ships for them some days before I quitted my position before Toulon.

I have received a letter from Captain Towry of the *Diadem* by the *Raven*, dated off the Gulf of Ajaccio the 23rd, reporting that on the receipt of a letter from Captain Freemantle, communicating his having fallen in with the Spanish fleet off Cape Rivellata on the 20th, he had come to a resolution to proceed to Porto Ferrajo through the Bocca of Bonifacio, a measure I highly approve ; for although there is reason to believe the Spanish fleet, after having been so rudely treated by the elements on the coast of Corsica, is at anchor in the Bay of Hyères or Toulon, there has been so much wind and swell from the northward, that the transports would have found great difficulty in weathering the island, which at this season of the year is to be coasted with caution.

The transports, having the garrisons of Calvi and San Fiorenzo on board, will proceed to Porto Ferrajo the moment they can get under way with safety ; at present they pitch fore-castle in.

I am impatient for the junction of Rear-Admiral Man, who I think must have been in possession of my original orders and the duplicates between the 10th and 14th ; and unencumbered

with transports or trade, there is no difficulty in his way that may not readily be surmounted.

I send orders to Captain Cockburn of La Minerve by the Raven, to abandon the blockade of Leghorn and join me. I have appointed Mr. Edward Elliot acting Lieutenant of the Peterel, vice Mr. William Drummond invalided at Ajaccio Hospital, in the last stage of the venereal disease; Mr. Elliot is brother to Lady le Despencer, but has been unaccountably neglected; was found serving before the mast on board the Princess Royal by Captain Purvis, who finding him deserving placed him on the quarter-deck, and recommended him to me several months ago; and his conduct here having been very exemplary, I persuade myself your lordship will direct an Admiralty Commission to be made out for him.

I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect,

Your lordship's most faithful
and obedient humble servant,
J. JERVIS.

Victory, in Mortella Bay.

P.S.—Having learnt that Mr. Drummond died on the 18th October, I have since given Mr. Elliot a commission for the Peterel.

SPENCER TO JERVIS

PRIVATE.

8th November, 1796.

Dear Sir,—

The new complexion of affairs which has arisen by the Spanish Declaration of War, added to the very unexpected turn given to your

situation by the squadron under Admiral Man continuing separated from you, makes us very naturally beyond measure anxious to hear further announcements from you. We have all the fullest confidence in your abilities and judgment, and upon the most mature deliberation have judged it far the most advisable to leave a very great latitude to your discretion for the conduct of the fleet under your command. The great points which will naturally offer themselves to your consideration (supposing the enemy's force to remain entire and to form a junction) are the great advantage which would be derived to your general operations by the confinement of that force within the Mediterranean, and the protection which good faith as well as national interest calls upon us to give to Portugal. In order the better to enable you to take both these objects into your plan of operations (as far at least as the nature of things will allow) the limits of your command are extended so as to comprise the coast of Portugal; and though for the first of the two objects above mentioned, it might undoubtedly be desirable to keep a very strict look-out in the Straits of Gibraltar, yet the circumstances attending that station in time of war for a large fleet, and many other considerations which will offer themselves to you better than I can pretend to point them out, have induced us to point your attention to the Tagus as a place of resort for your fleet and a rendezvous for supplies of all kinds in preference to Gibraltar. Lord Hugh Seymour¹ informs me that he has written to you to apprise you of our intention of adding to the number of ships under your command, and I am sanguine enough to hope that we may be enabled to carry

¹ One of the three Sea Lords. Gambier and William Thompson were the other two; all rear-admirals.

that addition so far as to give you thirty sail-of-the-line in the course of the next two months. We shall also pay attention, as far as our means will go, to the necessity of relieving some of your ships which their long continuance abroad must have weakened. In the meantime we know and trust that as far as your means go you will make the best possible use of what you have. The Portuguese squadron of from eight to twelve sail-of-the-line (such as they are) will be most ready to co-operate, and I have the greatest hopes that after the first difficulty is overcome, which from the untoward circumstances of the Mediterranean was unavoidable, the Spaniards will soon feel that they have no reason to plume themselves upon their resumption of the sword.

I am, dear Sir, with great truth,

Your very faithful humble servant,

SPENCER.

Admiralty, 8th November, 1796.

(To Sir John Jervis. Duplicate enclosed in another letter written on the 10th December, 1796.)

JERVIS TO SPENCER

11th November, 1796.

My Lord,—I consider as a great blessing that the evacuation of Corsica had taken place before I received the orders to maintain the Viceroy in the sovereignty of it, which could not have been effected for any length of time, as the moment the enemy had landed in force, every man in the interior of the island would have taken part with him, and there was not a tenable post in it. I shall have much to say to your lordship on this subject when we meet. The conduct of Admiral Man is incomprehensible; he acknowledges to

have received my orders and the duplicates, and that he opened the dispatch which directed my continuance in the Mediterranean. I have taken the liberty of cautioning him against consulting with the captains under his orders, who all wanted to get to England ; and yet by a passage in his public letter it appears he acted with their concurrence. I conclude a powerful reinforcement will be sent to me immediately, with the means of subsistence. In the interim, I am endeavouring to collect provisions at Porto Ferrajo, sufficient to victual 20,000 men for three months, at whole allowance, in addition to what we have on board.

I cannot describe to your lordship the disappointment my ambition and zeal to serve my country have suffered by this diminution of my force, for had Admiral Man sailed from Gibraltar on the 10th October, the day he received my orders, and fulfilled them, I have every reason to believe the Spanish fleet would have been cut to pieces ; the extreme disorder and confusion they were observed to be in by the judicious officers who fell in with them leaving no doubt in my mind that a fleet so trained and generally well commanded as this is would have made its way through them in every direction.

I have the pleasure to assure you that Lord Proby acquits himself well in his command, and I am very happy that he is clear of the *Tarleton*, for she was in extreme danger of going down in the passage from San Fiorenzo to Porto Ferrajo.

I have the honour to be, with the truest respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful

and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, 20 leagues S.S.E. from Minorca.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

[Gibraltar] 2nd December, 1796.

My Lord,—I was honoured with your lordship's letter of the 8th November by the *Fortune* at sea, and with that of the 25th of October on my arrival here. Considering the unavoidable change of orders which has arisen out of the extraordinary circumstances of this war, I ought to be thankful that I am where I am ; yet I cannot help reflecting on what might have been done, had not Sir Hyde Parker availed himself of the loose intelligence he received from a vessel,¹ and the more unfortunate decision of Rear-Admiral Man since. The Spanish frigate captured by Captain Bowen,² in so skilful and officer-like manner, being a beautiful and formidable ship of her class, I have directed Commissioner Inglefield to cause her to be surveyed, valued, and purchased for his Majesty's service ; and it is my intention to appoint Captain Giffard to the command of her, to promote Captain Woodhouse to *La Mignonne*, to remove Lord Proby to the *Peterel* and to give Lieutenant Maitland, 1st of the *Lively*, an order to command the *Transfer* ; for I feel that I ought to devote the first fruits of the Spanish War in the Mediterranean to Lady Spencer, and I trust your lordship will approve (in this instance) of my breaking into the Admiralty patronage. With respect to Captain Redmill, he must have gone to England when the *Tarleton* was sold, for a

¹ See vol. i. pp. 290–1.

² Capt. Richard Bowen of the *Terpsichore* (32) captured the *Mahonesa* (34) off Cape de Gata on 13th October, after a stubborn action of an hour and fifty minutes. This was the first capture after the Spanish declaration of war.

volunteer captain in the fleet I never can submit to, and I think your lordship will, on consideration, approve my determination. The acting lieutenants that I have in contemplation to appoint to La Mahonesa and the gunboats in preparation here are Mr. Pierrepont, son to Lord Pierrepont ; Mr. Chiene, nephew to a very worthy man, late master attendant at Ajaccio, recommended by my niece Lady Northesk, Admiral Linzee and Captain Purvis ; Mr. Winton by Admiral Waldegrave and Captain Dacres ; Mr. Gauntlett, son to a very respectable wine merchant at Winchester, who came out with me in the *Lively* ; and Mr. Alner, recommended a year ago by Admiral Man and Captain O'Brien.¹ Mr. Beaufoy is still acting as a lieutenant in the *St. George*, and I hope your lordship will move the Board to grant him a commission ; and I have no doubt Lieutenant John Ellis, 2nd of the *Virago* gunboat, who made his way from Ajaccio to Gibraltar with so much credit to himself and advantage to the service, will meet with the same encouragement. Lieutenant Berry, for whom you have shewn so much consideration, is 'First' of the Captain, and I will be bold to assert a more meritorious officer does not exist.

I have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful
and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, Gibraltar Bay.

¹ Capt. Edward O'Brien, Man's flag-captain.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

10th December, 1796.

My Lord,—Although the weather has been more unpropitious to our operations almost the whole time of our anchorage here than I ever remember it in a long acquaintance with Gibraltar, we have really done a great deal ; but I find the situation so extremely dangerous to the safety of the squadron that I shall proceed to the Tagus with the utmost dispatch, taking the Camel and Serapis store-ships with me, that I may be able to supply such defects in topmasts and yards as we have not been able to effect at this place.

I have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful

and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, Rosia Bay.

SPENCER TO JERVIS

10th December 1796.

Dear Sir,—I enclose you a duplicate of a letter I wrote to you on the 8th ultimo ; and not having since that received any information from you that could be sufficiently depended upon to ground any measure on it, I cannot at present add anything further than that the anxiety we felt for your situation then is naturally much increased by the great uncertainty we are under concerning your intentions and the state of your supplies. Admiral Man has not been heard of here since the date of his detaching the Audacious, which

ship he sent home with a convoy on the 23rd October last. Admiral Thompson, whom we had sent to take the command of his squadron, as I informed you in my letter of the 25th October, was on the 2nd November off Lisbon, and I much hope he met with Admiral Man whose purpose was, according to his last letter (written on his sailing from Gibraltar), to have cruised off the Straits till the 31st October. If he should have done so, I am willing to flatter myself that Admiral Thompson may have proceeded up the Mediterranean to join you; and should the junction have been effected, I have no apprehension remaining of what you may do with either the French or Spanish fleet, though they should perhaps outnumber you a little. Considerable supplies of provisions have been some time at Gibraltar, and more are on the point of sailing for Lisbon, where I hope ere long to hear of your arrival, both because I think in the present state of the Mediterranean and till your fleet is reinforced, it will be the best position, and because it will give encouragement to the Court of Portugal, the only ally except Austria that seems much disposed to co-operate with us effectually. Five or six sail-of-the-line will be ready in a very few days to sail from Spithead to be added to your fleet, and they will be instructed to look for you either at Gibraltar or Lisbon; and though this addition will not bring up your number to that I mentioned in my last letter, it is our intention to proceed in preparation for further reinforcements with that view with as little delay as possible.

I am, dear Sir, with great truth,

Your very obedient humble servant,

SPENCER.

SPENCER TO JERVIS

16th December, 1796.

Dear Sir,—I have received the triplicate of your letter of the 26th October (the original and duplicate not having yet reached me) and your letters of the 29th October and 11th November. The removal of gunners you propose on the superannuation of the gunner of the *Zealous* shall be effected, and the commission of Mr. Elliot for the *Peterel* will, of course, be confirmed. You cannot lament more sincerely than I do the circumstance of Admiral Man's not having returned to you on receiving your orders of the 27th September. The opportunity which was missed on that occasion was so promising that one can scarce be sanguine enough to hope that another such will happen in the course of the war. If any such should again occur, I have seen too much of the spirit and vigour with which all your operations are marked not to feel quite confident that every possible use would be made of it, and that the event must be glorious to the British arms.

The incredible fluctuations of circumstances in the respective situations of the enemy's fleets and ours, added to the great interruptions which happen in our communications, make it impossible for me to give you anything like an opinion on the measures which it may be proper for you to pursue. The orders we have sent have been purposely so framed as to leave a great deal to your discretion and judgment, which we are confident will be used to the best advantage. If Admiral Man's squadron should have returned to you, of which at this moment we are not certain,

but which I cannot help suspecting may be the case, you will, I hope, have joined them long before this reaches you ; and at all events we are going to send you out a squadron of five line-of-battle ships, two three-deckers and three seventy-fours, under Rear-Admiral W. Parker, which may, I hope, be ready to sail in about ten days from this time.¹ If Admiral Man should come home (and if he does he must arrive in two or three days) we shall add five or six more, and we have already sent out a considerable supply of provisions both to Lisbon and Gibraltar for your disposal.

The state of the Spanish navy seems to be such that the sooner you meet them the better it will be for us, and a good hard blow struck now or soon will be worth twenty a little later. I made Lord Carysfort very happy this morning by mentioning to him the good account you give me of Lord Proby. You have established so good a school for young officers that if a lad has anything in him, it must come out.

Believe me, dear Sir [&c.],

SPENCER.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

19th December, 1796.

My Lord,—The following is the best account I can collect of the deplorable fate of the *Courageux*.²

The most intelligent of the five men picked

¹ Rear-Admiral William Parker brought out in February the *Prince George* (98), *Namur* (90), three 74's and a frigate.

² The *Courageux* having parted her cables in a gale, drifted under the Algeçiras batteries and was compelled to put to sea. She was wrecked under Apes' Hill on the Barbary coast, and only 129 out of her complement of 593 were saved. Burrows, the first lieutenant, was in command, Capt. Hallowell being ashore sitting on a court-martial.

up in the launch by the Niger says that, when the Culloden drove after anchoring in Rosia Bay, he heard a conversation between the first lieutenant and master upon the quarter-deck, the result of which was a determination to keep in the Gut until the next morning ; that the people were hard at work clearing the booms and decks of empty casks, sticking them down in the hold, and taking in the topsails which had split, until eight o'clock in the evening, when orders were given to pipe to dinner, they not having been off the deck from breakfast to that hour. Lieutenant Ainslie (who never had charge of a watch before) was left upon deck to look out, while the first lieutenant, master, and other officers took some refreshment. A little before nine the land was seen ahead, and Mr. Ainslie, instead of putting the helm a-weather and easing off the main sheet, sent down to the first lieutenant and master to acquaint them of the danger. Mr. Burrows, who though an experienced officer was a nervous man, burst into hysterics, while the master made every effort to wear the ship, but it was too late ; for the bowsprit struck against the precipice, and the ship going bump ashore, swung alongside it, her foremast went overboard, and she divided in two parts very soon. One of the boat-keepers of the launch heard the voices of the first lieutenant and master on the stern ladders, among many others, and the last sound was a dismal shriek from the people. Mr. Burrows had been brought up under me, and was a very capable man (born in the surf of the sea, son to an old lieutenant and inhabitant of Oreston in Catwater), deficient in strength of constitution only. Mr. Morton, the master, is considered as one of the best we have. Captain Hallowell

brought him from his former ship, the Lowestoft, and thinks highly of his knowledge and judgment. My conclusion therefore is, that the current, which varies every day, had set the ship much faster to the southward than he was aware of; and the atmosphere was so thick and dark they did not see the land, although mountainous, until they were close aboard of it.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Your lordship's very faithful

and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, off Cape St. Vincent.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

22nd December, 1796.

My Lord,—Since my public letter was closed, Mr. Jackson, master of the Victory, is returned from the Bombay Castle, and reports that she attempted to enter the Tagus, too near the close of day, and that the ship took a sheer from the counter tide against the helm. The pilot made motions to let go the anchor, which were either not understood, or there was a want of decision arising out of the chapter of nerves and not an over competency of seamanship, though the captain is in other respects a zealous officer. The ship is lying in a most perilous state, but I hope the applications I have made to the Minister of Marine through Mr. Walpole and to the Portuguese Admiral by Captain Grey, will produce means to get her off. In Mr. Jackson, who is gone down again, I have a host.

From a conversation with Vice-Admiral

Vandeput,¹ I learn that the Court is much more anxious to avoid giving offence to Spain than solicitous for our support against the projected invasion, probably in vain hope that the menace held out has only for its object the obtaining more advantageous terms of peace from us.

I have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful
and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, off Belem Castle, in the Tagus.

SPENCER TO JERVIS

23rd December, 1796.

Dear Sir,—As we are going to send out a cutter to you to take the chance of meeting you at Lisbon, I write a few lines in haste just to express the satisfaction I derived from the receipt of your letter of the 2nd instant, informing us of your safe arrival at Gibraltar. . . .

You will see by our public communications that you may have a chance of seeing something of the fleet from Brest, on the coast of Portugal. It remains very doubtful where they are going yet; but if they go southward and Colpoys should miss them, I most sincerely hope they may fall into your way.² Since my last I have to acknowledge the receipt of yours of the 23rd October (duplicate), of the 24th November about Captain Calder, of whose request I will make a memorandum, though I cannot give any positive

¹ Vice-Admiral George Vandeput had been sent in the *St. Albans* to the Tagus to keep the Portuguese in heart. He came down with the trade in April.

² See vol. I. pt. viii. p. 363 *et seq.*

promise about it at present ; and of the 2nd December, to which the former part of my letter is as much of an answer as I have time now to write before our express goes off.

Believe me, dear Sir,

Your very obedient, humble servant,

SPENCER.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

29th December, 1796.

My Lord,—The Government of Portugal exhibits the most melancholy picture I ever beheld or read of, and it becomes me to apprise you that no reliance whatever can be placed on the Portuguese marine for the defence of the country.

I have been at some pains to enquire into the state of the army, and although they have 30,000 troops on paper, I doubt whether they will bring more than 12,000 into the field (I mean national troops), and these without one necessary provision for opening the campaign—neither hospital, or hospital staff, camp equipage, or clothing (except what they have on their backs), or magazines of any kind ; the Commander-in-Chief, an imbecile, capable of nothing but mortal hatred to the Prince of Brazil,¹ who has not force of character sufficient to remove him ; an empty treasury, the Minister of Finance a miserable bigot, who has suffered everything to run into confusion, and has not capacity to correct the abuses which obstruct the collection of the revenue. Orders and regulations published continually, but no attention or obedience paid to them in any one department. Crimes go unpunished, while honours and rewards

¹ Don John of Brazil, Prince Regent of Portugal.

are bestowed without just distinction ; the Court filled with monks and friars, and the capital become so offensive by the dereliction of the police, that it cannot be long without pestilence. This is really and truly the view I see Portugal in, and I never was more disposed to take the favourable profile, having no tincture of prejudice, arising from ill-humour, want of health or spirits, and having certainly received every mark of distinction the Prince or the Minister could shew.

The weather has been equally unpropitious to fitting, rigging, and all other operations of equipment as at Gibraltar, and the ebb tide runs with such rapidity nothing can be done by boats except during the slack, which is very short. Nevertheless I trust we shall be ready by the time the reinforcement arrives. After the description I have given of the Court and Government, your lordship will not be surprised that they are without intelligence. All they possess, even from Spain, is obtained through the correspondence of merchants, their Ambassador at Madrid dealing in nothing but idle tales, which he gets from the Prince of Peace. I have endeavoured to encourage Mr. Lempiere, the Vice-Consul at Faro, to open his channels of communication with Spain, I must confess, with little hopes of success ; for he was nearly ruined by exerting himself during the American War, when he procured the most important intelligence, and never could obtain the payment of the expense he was at, or any recompense whatsoever, for the eminent services he rendered, though every proper representation was made in his favour by Mr. Walpole, Sir John Hart, and all who were privy to his exertions. I have every reason to believe the Spanish fleet is within the Mediterranean, and it appears to

me that the best move I can make is to cruise between Cape Spartel and Cadiz, keeping the Gut open with a strong westerly wind, in order to take shelter to the eastward of Gibraltar or Ceuta, during the continuance of it, and to resume the position out of the Straits when the wind backs to the eastward. I have omitted to mention that the naval arsenal here is without stores or victuals, and I have cause to believe the ships afloat are ill provided with both, and no salted provisions are to be purchased. Lieutenant Willoughby of the *Culloden*, in whom your lordship takes an interest, has a hectic complaint, and the surveying captains and surgeons give as their opinion that he cannot recover on board ship. I have therefore directed a sick ticket to be signed for his going ashore. From Captain Troubridge I learn that he languishes to get to England. Having lost a brother in the West Indies, he has taken it into his head that he must die too, unless he returns to his native soil. Lieutenant Ryder of the *Zealous* is also very importunate to get to England. One principal reason set forth in his application is that he cannot please Captain Hood, who having found the ship in a most undisciplined, disorderly state, the people incessantly drunk, as in the *Victory*, *Britannia*, *St. George*, *Windsor Castle*, and other ships in the fleet, found it necessary to call upon the officers to make exertions, which, from other habits, they were little inclined to do (Lord Harvey, who was no officer, having suffered everything to relax). Dissatisfaction of course followed, and the captain, whose whole soul is wrapped up in the profession, has been obliged to appear upon all occasions as the only means of establishing discipline and good order, which he has most effectually done.

If Mr. Ryder perseveres in his desire to go upon half-pay, I propose putting one of the lieutenants of the Bombay Castle in his place, until l'Aigle joins, when Captain Hood will be accommodated with his old first lieutenant, Mr. Webly, whose share of merit, in running the Juno out of the Road of Toulon, after she was boarded by the French guard boat, your lordship may remember he bore ample testimony to in his relation of that spirited and judicious transaction.

I have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful
and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, in the Tagus.

(Received 16th January, 1797. Answered 19th February, 1797. Private.)

JERVIS TO SPENCER

30th December, [1796].

My Lord,—Should the Austrians have another campaign in Italy, a powerful squadron of frigates, with one fifty-gun ship, should be in the Adriatic early in April, or the French will make a descent at Trieste, and prevent the supply of the Austrian army from thence. If your lordship approve of this proposition, I will prepare the ships, by having them victualled and stored for six months, when the season approaches: the utmost secrecy is necessary in this operation, or the enemy may frustrate it.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Your lordship's very faithful
and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, in the Tagus.

MAN TO SPENCER

30th December, 1796.

My Lord,—My public letter having accounted to your lordship on all the existing circumstances which have led me to deviate from the orders I received from Sir John Jervis and Sir Hyde Parker, and although I have been so unfortunate in not bringing home the five ships of the squadron in the state I had led myself to hope I should, so as to have been fit for early service, yet, I trust, as I have acted through the whole business with no other motive than that of a most sincere desire of rendering the most essential service to my country, it may meet your approbation.

The quitting my station, my Lord, I know to be of very serious import ; but when the circumstances and situation we were then in are considered by your lordship and the Board, I trust the necessity will plead for the act. To effect a junction with the Commander-in-Chief was thought very impracticable, considering the enemy's force and their apparent situation in the neighbourhood of Corsica long before us. Besides the knowledge I had of the intended evacuation of that island, if it could be effected (and which I believe is in general thought would not have been permitted by any people but Spaniards), gave strong reason to doubt of our being able to get up time enough to meet them ; and in the event of our not joining him, we must have run the greatest hazard of being cut off, as our sailing either eastward or westward would be communicated as fast as vessels could convey it, frigates being stationed at Ceuta and all along the coast. Then, my Lord, our provisions

were reduced very low, for excepting bread and a moderate portion of wine, Gibraltar could only produce sufficient for three months for the squadron, a very small proportion when considered for the fleet. There was also the consideration that when Sir John Jervis directed those orders, he could not be informed of the Spanish fleet being in the Mediterranean, as they sailed from Cadiz the day they were dated. It is true I might have remained longer in the neighbourhood, so as to receive some subsequent order to the information I had sent him (and which I might have done perhaps greatly to my own advantage, and those with me), but in doing so for a month or so, it would have been expending the provisions on a doubtful case, and we had no means of supply without going to Lisbon ; and the obtaining any there, or at least sufficient for a squadron, was very doubtful ; to which I must add, the sickness appearing on board the ships was at first very alarming, and indeed though it has not latterly appeared of so contagious a nature, yet it has been very serious, as I have no doubt you have been informed. If it has pleased God that the ships are safe arrived, with respect, my Lord, to my not sending the ships to Sir Hyde Parker, as his orders directed, I had to consider that as Monsieur Richery was certainly not gone to the West Indies but to Newfoundland, the object on which the Vice-Admiral proceeded was done away—and that as the conduct of Spain had so much altered the state of affairs, Government would naturally wish for all the force that could be collected for such purposes as they might have in view. These, my Lord, are my reasons for the step I have taken, and I can only rest in conscious rectitude that what I have done

has been with the best judgment I have been able to form, and with the sincere hope that it might prove right.

I have the honour to remain, my Lord

Your lordship's most obedient

humble servant,

R. MAN.

Windsor Castle, Cawsand Bay.

SPENCER TO MAN

2nd January, 1797.

Dear Sir,—Though it is impossible for me not to feel very great regret at the determination which you took to leave the Straits to return to England, which has been in some respects attended with considerable inconvenience and hazard to the service, though fortunately by no means to such an extent as we at first apprehended it might, I have, however, no hesitation in saying that I do not doubt but that you acted upon what appeared to you at the time the best line for the good of the service. If, of the several dispatches which we sent to meet you, any one had reached you, the very long and uncomfortable passage you have had home would have been saved, and your ships, most of which are now I fear *hors de combat*, at least for a time, would have still been effective and of great use to Sir John Jervis.

Your not obeying Sir Hyde Parker's orders was perfectly right, because the only ground for their being given no longer existed; on the contrary, the motive for Sir John Jervis wishing you to join him, so far from being removed, was much strengthened by the Spanish fleet being in the Mediterranean; and as the order was not in any

respect discretionary and was repeated after an interval of some days, it was hardly possible to doubt that his anxiety for your junction was very pressing. It is true that he might not at the time be apprised of the situation of the Spanish fleet, but if he had it must still have occurred to be probable that such a piece of intelligence would only have increased his wish to see you. These were the sentiments which first struck us on first reading your letter mentioning the step you had taken, and it is not from any impression taken after the event that I write ; for luckily it has turned out, at least to Sir John Jervis's fleet, much better than we expected. As it may be inconvenient to order the Windsor Castle to sea again at this time of year in her disabled state, we have directed her to be paid off at Plymouth, and your flag will of course be struck. When you are enabled to come to town I shall be glad to see you and talk over anything more relating to these subjects which may then occur.

I am, dear Sir,

Your very obedient, humble servant,

SPENCER.

Admiralty.

MAN TO SPENCER

4th January, 1797.

My Lord,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your lordship's favours of the 25th October and 2nd instant, and greatly lament that my having brought the squadron home does not so entirely meet with your lordship's approbation as I had enjoyed the hope it would have done. I can with great truth assure your

lordship you do me justice in conceiving that I have acted with best line my judgment formed for the good of his Majesty's service, and heartily glad should I have been, my Lord, had any of the dispatches you mention have reached me. I should have obeyed them with pleasure, as acting conformable with the wishes of Government, a conduct that has ever held the first object with me in the course of my service. It is true, my Lord, that Sir John Jervis's order was not discretionary, but the repetition was only a duplicate, bearing of course the same date, and though sent from him some few days subsequent to the original, yet it was prior to almost a possibility of his receiving the account of the Spanish fleet. Had any other order reached me, there would not have been a doubt in my mind, whatever had been the consequence. That he could not wish more to see me than I did him I can with great truth declare, and it is not easy to describe my feelings on that account. Thank God, things have so fortunately turned that no immediate evil has resulted from this, what I must think an unfortunate act of mine, though, as I have already said, meant with the best intention. I am happy in finding my non-compliance with Sir Hyde Parker's orders met your lordship's approbation ; and with respect to the Windsor Castle being ordered to be paid off at this port, it is as I expected ; and I sincerely hope, whenever she goes to sea again, she will be a better ship than I have found her. I think at present there cannot well be a worse. The public papers have announced the arrival of the *Saturn*, *Terrible*, and *Defence* at Falmouth, of which your lordship must have been apprised several days ago ; and as the accounts of their defects must

have been forwarded to the Board, their lordships' directions will have been signified to the respective captains as to what port they are to proceed to for refitting. The Hector, I learn, was spoke with off Scilly on or about the 31st, and as we have had some westerly winds since, I trust both her and the Cumberland are arrived at Spithead. That the whole of the squadron are *hors de combat* is most certain, and I am extremely sorry it proves so; but indeed, my Lord, we have had much sea work; we have been nearly twelve out of fifteen months constantly at sea, and received but very partial refittings.

I shall certainly do myself the honour of waiting on your lordship as soon as possible. At present I am unfortunately affected with almost total deafness, occasioned, I believe, from cold caught the night of the Saturn making signals of distress in the Channel.

I have the honour to remain,

Your lordship's most obedient

humble servant,

R. MAN.

Cawsand Bay.

JERVIS TO SPENCER¹

22nd February, 1797.

My Lord,—My health being somewhat restored since the Lively sailed, I resume the pen, just to state to your lordship that I propose to place Captains Marsh, Lindsay, Lord Mark Kerr and Prowse in the four Spanish ships, if I have the

¹ After the battle of St. Vincent Jervis had taken the fleet and his four prizes into Lagos Bay, where the Spanish squadron made an abortive attempt to attack him. See vol. i. p. 352.

good fortune to get them safe into the Tagus, and to appoint Captain Berry, Lieutenants Bligh and Lee of the *Barfleur*, and Waller of the *Victory* to the vacant sloops, until your pleasure is known ; Mr. Burdett will then be the only person on your very long list now present unprovided for. In justice to Mr. Waller, who is a very accomplished officer and follower of my fortunes, I cannot leave him out : to do it would break his heart. The warrant officers will be chiefly named from the ships which were most in action, and the succession observed with as much regularity as is consistent with their merits and length of service.

I thank you very much for sending me out so good a batch as that under Rear-Admiral Parker. Had I made the selection I could not be better satisfied. Captain Whitshed, Sir James Saumarez, Murray and Martin I have long known, and I am very much interested in Captain Irwin, whose father behaved gallantly under my command forty years ago. The Rear-Admiral and they are a valuable addition to my excellent stock.¹

I shall not be at ease until I get the squadron out of this foul anchorage ; a few hours' moderate weather with the wind out of the bay will accomplish it, and the assurances I receive from the pilots and fishermen encourage me to hope we shall be off in the course of to-morrow.

I have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful

and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, in Lagos Bay.

¹ Capt. John Irwin was Parker's flag-captain.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

26th February, 1797.

My Lord,—Captain Hallowell,¹ who will have the honour to present you with this, has laid me under so great and lasting an obligation, by continuing on board the Victory until our approach to the Tagus, that I beg leave to repeat to your lordship, I shall esteem any kindness you are so good to shew him as the greatest favour you can confer on me.

After the squadron had passed Cape St. Vincent I received intelligence from different quarters that the Spanish fleet consisted of twenty-two sail-of-the-line, and that two others had sailed from Cadiz to join them. The Culloden and Colossus were so shaken by having fallen on board each other, a few nights before the action, that their longer continuance at sea became extremely hazardous—the foremast, bowsprit and mainyard of the former and all the lower masts of the Captain badly wounded, and in a tottering state, insomuch they would not stand a gale of wind; and in addition, several of the ships were very low in their stock of water. These circumstances, with the four captured ships in tow, determined me not to go out of the way to seek the enemy; had we fallen in with him, I certainly should have invited another trial of skill.

A formidable two-deck ship is much wanted for Commodore Nelson, the Captain being done up. Should a promotion to the flag take place, the Cæsar would suit exactly and Captain [*line illegible from damp*] choice might go into her.

The Victory, Prince George, Blenheim,

¹ Hallowell had lost his ship just before the battle. See *ante*, p. 79.

Culloden and Captain make water from shot holes, some full below the surface, but I hope, by lightening them, we shall be able to set everything to rights. The Britannia, well manned and ably commanded, is from her bad sailing a clog to the squadron. I wish much Captain Foley, who is a valuable officer, was placed in a seventy-four-gun ship. Captain Hood has exerted himself in forwarding the repairs of the Zealous; the number of times she has been hove keel out would have exhausted an ordinary mind. Commodore Nelson, Captain Troubridge, he, and Captain Hallowell abound in resources, and are very great characters.

I fear the refitment of the St. George will be too tedious an operation to go on with, and that it will be advisable to send her to England, without docking, when the season is more favourable. Of this I shall be a better judge when I see Commissioner [*line illegible from damp*] by the friendly assistance of Dom Rodrigo de Souza, Minister of Marine.

Captain Hall will be able to relate the unlucky circumstances touching the Santissima Trinidad and all other occurrences which have happened since the departure of the Lively, and you may safely rely on his statements, his judgment being uncommonly correct.¹

I have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful
and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, off Cape Spichel. 26th February, 1797.
(Received 9th March, 1797. Private.)

¹ Capt. J. S. Hall of the Argo (44) had come out with a convoy and was returning with another.

SPENCER TO JERVIS

7th March, 1797.

Dear Sir,—I wrote to you on the 3rd instant on the moment of receiving your account of the glorious event of the 14th February, because I was unwilling to let a moment escape without expressing (however weakly) the high satisfaction excited in all our minds by your conduct and success on that occasion. It is with great pleasure that I now have to acquaint you that the public has felt the importance of that event and the merit of those concerned in it in the way they ought to do, and the exultation and applause which it has occasioned have been worthy of the brilliant exploits which have given rise to them. The two Houses of Parliament have unanimously voted you their thanks with every expression of praise and panegyric from every man of all parties in both of them, and you will receive them in the proper form from the Chancellor and Speaker. The Board of Admiralty has distinguished your victory by as ample a promotion as I believe has ever been ordered on such an occasion, and have accordingly sent out post commissions for the masters and commanders who were present in the action, and commissions of master and commander to the two first lieutenants of the *Victory*, and the first lieutenant of every line-of-battle ship engaged in it. His Majesty has also been graciously pleased to direct that a gold medal, similar to that which was given on the victory under Lord Howe on the 1st of June, should be given to and worn by the flag-officers and captains in your line-of-battle as a memorial of a victory obtained over a force so superior to your own; and in order more

particularly to mark his Royal approbation of this service, he has commanded me to acquaint you with his intention of conferring a British earldom on you as soon as you express the title you are desirous of bearing. I am happy to be charged with the communication of honours so well earned ; and though I am persuaded nothing I can say can enhance the value of them, I cannot resist my desire of adding my most sincere and cordial congratulations to you on the glorious event by which they are occasioned. It is with much pleasure I observe that the only recommendation for a promotion mentioned in your letter of the 16th February which will not be included in the general one on account of the action (to which I beforealluded), namely, that of Lieutenant Noble, had already been anticipated by us. Commodore Nelson had made so good a report of that officer's conduct in the action with the Sabina and on other occasions that though a little beyond the usual course of promotion I thought it but fair that he should have it.¹

I feel very anxious to hear again from you, though I collect from Sir Robert Calder's report that it is most probable the enemy have returned to Cadiz. Sir Robert (on whom the King was pleased to confer the honour of knighthood on his arrival) will return to you in a very few days with a squadron consisting of the Ville de Paris and three or four two-deckers. The arrangements which I mentioned to you in my letter of the 1st March are, in consequence of the conversation we have had with Sir Robert Calder, a little

¹ When Nelson on his way to evacuate Porto Ferrajo in December 1796 in the Minerve captured the Sabina (40) Lieutenant James Noble was wounded. He had followed the Commodore into the Minerve from the Captain.

altered. We find that it will be necessary for the St. George to come home, and therefore Captain Thomas need not go out. The Britannia too will, as I understand, be a fitter ship to send back in lieu of the Ville de Paris than the Victory, which latter, though not very stout, he thinks may stand a summer longer. Admiral Nelson will, I find, prefer a two-decked ship to a larger one, and Admiral Parker may therefore have the choice between the Victory and the Barfleur; but as I suppose he will prefer the latter as more permanent, some arrangements shall be made accordingly, which Sir Robert Calder will carry out with him, and I should recommend your sending home Sir Charles Knowles in the Britannia, if you see no objection to it.

As to the observations contained in my letter of the 1st instant as to the state of the naval campaign, you have so well anticipated my views by your proceedings a fortnight before I wrote them, that it becomes unnecessary to add any more on that subject.

The public letters will afford you all the information on the subject of your official dispatches that you can require, and I will not intrude on your time any longer at present than to assure you that no man can feel with more sincerity and truth than I do the warmest wishes for the continuance of your success and the increase of your well deserved celebrity.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Your very obedient and humble servant,

SPENCER.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

22nd March, 1797.

My Lord,—The goodness of the King towards me has no bounds, and I beg your lordship will lay me most humbly at his Majesty's feet, and express the gratitude I feel for the gracious manner in which he has been pleased to accept and reward my services, by advancing me to the dignity of a British earldom. This great and unexpected event makes a change in the title, which I had the honour to name in my letter of the 15th instant, necessary. I therefore request you will submit the following to his Majesty's consideration: 'Baron Jervis, Viscount St. Vincent, and Earl of Yarmouth.' The approbation it has pleased his Majesty to shew of the conduct of the admirals and captains who were in the action of the 14th February, by directing chains and medals, similar to those which perpetuate the glorious 1st of June, to be given to, and worn by them, has made the deepest impression on the minds of all, and I entreat your lordship to convey in the most humble and dutiful manner, our grateful sense thereof.

I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect,

Your lordship's most obedient

humble servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, in the Tagus.

ADMIRAL PARKER TO SPENCER

1st September, 1797.

My Lord,—I heard some time back by some of my friends in England that from a statement of the action of the 14th February by Commodore

Nelson, I had not that credit that they understood properly belonged to me. I have not had it in my power to do myself the justice I might be entitled to, for the want of a sight of that letter, which I did not get until the 20th of July. 'Tis of no moment to me to make any observation further than concerns myself. I have written to him upon the subject, which, lest your lordship may not have considered me in the situation I really stood from that cause also, I beg leave to enclose the copy of what I have written, with his answer.¹ He was absent from the fleet at the time I wrote and upon his return had lost his arm. I had no immediate reply; 'twas left with the Commander-in-Chief, with whom he lived, to be delivered after he had gone to England, as I was told, to prevent a rejoinder, but with assurances that no offence was meant by him to me, and that he never intended it to be understood that both ships had struck to him. His answer is little to the purpose, though after what he had written it could not be much otherwise. He has got my observations as far as respects myself, and I received in words what I suppose was thought he should not commit to paper, for I believe he acted by advice upon the occasion. I have no other object or wish than to be considered by your lordship in the way I am entitled, or any intention of making comments upon Admiral Nelson's letter but what concerned my own situation, and the ship he did not mention.

My Lord, with deference and respect, I remain,

Your lordship's most obliged and
obedient humble servant,

WILLIAM PARKER.

Blenheim, off Cadiz.

¹ These two letters will be found in Nicolas, *Nelson Despatches*, ii. 471-3, and have therefore been omitted here.

SPENCER TO PARKER

22nd September, 1797.

Dear Sir,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st instant, enclosing a copy of one you had written to Sir Horatio Nelson on the subject of the action of the 14th February last. I am sorry that you should suppose there is any reason for you to make any mention of this sort, as I believe I may safely say that there is not a man in the kingdom who has ever heard of that action who does not give to you as well as to all other officers concerned in it the fullest credit for your conduct on an occasion which will ever I believe be looked upon as one of the most glorious that has occurred in the history of the British navy. The variations in the accounts of an action at sea by different persons are so easily and naturally to be accounted for by the different situations in which the writers are at the time placed, and the different opportunities they have of making observations on what is passing, that it is neither necessary nor fair to draw an inference from them that any intention has existed of disparaging the conduct of others ; and I am quite persuaded that any such intention must have been very far from the thoughts of so gallant a man as Admiral Nelson.

I am, dear Sir, with great truth,

Your very obedient humble servant,

SPENCER.

Admiralty.

M 7011

PART II

PAPERS RELATING TO THE
MUTINIES AT SPITHEAD
AND THE NORE

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE papers in this section should be read with the public official documents given by Schomberg (vol. iii. p. 10, *et seq.*) and with those printed in the appendices of Mr. Conrad Gill's recent work, *The Naval Mutinies of 1797* (Manchester University Press, 1913), a book to which the Editor is much indebted for the elucidation of the documents that follow. They are selected from a large number, all of more or less interest. The most valuable new light on the subject will probably be found in the long 'Declaration' of that enigmatical figure, Richard Parker, who, within three weeks of his joining the navy for the third time, as a quota-man, found himself in fact 'Admiral' at the Nore. The narrative, so far as it can be tested from official documents, is accurate in detail, but there are obvious suppressions of matter which would emphasise the instability of his character. Seeing how promising was the patronage under which he started his career in the navy, it would seem clear that his failure to rise as an officer was due to a constitutional unfitness for the service.

From the point of view of general history the special interest of the document is his repeated and solemn asseverations that, so far as he knew, the mutiny had no connection with the revolutionary politics which at the time so many people believed were at the bottom of it. This aspect of the subject is treated with special fulness in Mr. Gill's book above-mentioned.

It has further a very human interest in view of a tradition in the Spencer family which is recorded at Althorp in the following words: 'Lord Spencer was so grieved at being obliged to sentence Richard Parker to

death, that by way of compensation and some alleviation of her grief, he allowed his widow £1200 or £1400 a year so long as she lived.'

To keep the progress of events clearly in mind it should be remembered there were four main mutinies: (1) that of the Channel Fleet at Spithead, 3rd to 17th April; (2) a second one in the same fleet at St. Helens, 24th April to 7th May; (3) a mutiny amongst the unattached ships at Sheerness and the Nore, which began to shew itself on 12th May; and (4) the sympathetic mutiny of Duncan's North Sea fleet which after various premonitory symptoms finally declared itself at Yarmouth on 27th May, by most of the ships deserting him and joining those at the Nore. There was also a minor outbreak at Plymouth in Commodore Warren's cruiser squadron which was based at that port and Falmouth.

CAPTAIN PAKENHAM TO SPENCER

Portsmouth, 11th December, 1796.

My Lord,—It has not been among my good fortunes to have the honour of an acquaintance with your lordship of sufficient intimacy to justify my giving my opinions unasked upon any subject or to enter without your desire into any consequence which may eventually apply to your lordship. But I have been long enough known to you to receive marks of favour and kindness at your lordship's hands, which it is not my nature to be insensible to, and feeling for my profession what I have always felt for myself, that it is your character to act fairly and your disposition to do kindly by those under your direction—under that impression I venture to take the liberty of entering upon the matter it is my purpose to communicate to you.

A letter from the captains at the Nore containing a memorial to the Admiralty for increase of pay has been sent for the concurrence of the captains here and is to-morrow to receive its discussion at a general meeting of the captains called for that purpose. The characters of the gentlemen composing that meeting afford abundant security for the temper and propriety of their conduct, and the object of the letter is so equitable and the necessity so obvious that no difference of opinion is likely to ensue. There are however ideas apt to rise in the minds of amiable and zealous

men, anxious to better the situations of the men committed to their care, which are also so humane and just as hardly to leave a doubt of their propriety in the consideration of any reasonable persons, and the consequences of their being broached and agitated apply directly to your lordship and the distinguished station you fill. I mean the increase of pay to the able seamen of the fleet who are the only description of men now serving his Majesty, whose situation by common exercise of their trade could be bettered fourfold, if they were released from the service of their country. That is a truth every seaman knows and a certain loss they endure with all the patience of subordination, and all the zeal of patriotism. They know as well as we do that the admirals' pay, either on leave or on duty, is payed without interruption or abridgment, and that is a consideration for their service equal to any they could probably by their industry or knowledge obtain. They know the lieutenants' pay has been increased to their satisfaction,¹ and they will now see the captains making an unanimous application in their own behalf. Every rank must seem to them to have their own immediate advantage for its object and to have lost sight in that pursuit of every attention to the underpaid condition of the thoroughbred seaman. It must seem so to them, and yet it is not so. Among their officers many are the men, and many of them are now here, who know the seaman's value and who know that he is of the only class among us whose intrinsic worth is four times the value of the consideration paid to him for it. But, my Lord, those men among the

¹ By Order in Council of 21st September, 1796. See Laird Clowes, iv. 157.

officers respect your character, they honour your feelings, and they had rather be directed in so momentous a concern by your instruction than by any proposal which might seem fitting from them, or by any application from the people serving under their commands. That application naturally is to be apprehended if some measure amidst those generally for the army, and for particular ranks of the navy, be not adopted for the encouragement and advantage of so useful a part of us; and that is the consequence I would take the liberty of warning your lordship of. It seems to me too probable to give foundation for any doubt. If therefore in the answer to the captains' memorial, they should be directed by your lordship to give an opinion upon the propriety of raising the pay of the accomplished seaman to 30 shillings per month during the war, to be reduced at the peace (when merchantmen's wages fall) to 24 shillings, the expense in addition would be inconsiderable, the gratitude of those fine fellows would be excessive, and the fame of having done so humane and so just a thing would be, by the concurrent applause of our profession, bestowed deservedly upon you. On the matter of this letter I have had no communication with my brother officers, but I know a few of the sentiments of some most respectable among them on the state of our present establishment. I feel my own motives for the liberty I am now taking to be justifiable, and I do hope that your lordship's goodness will see them as I feel them and that you will pardon this trouble.

From your lordship's most obedient
humble servant,

TH. PAKENHAM.

(Private. Received 12th December, 1796.)

SPENCER TO PAKENHAM

12th December, 1796.

Dear Sir,—I am extremely obliged to you for your letter not only as a testimonial of your doing justice to my feelings both towards yourself and towards the profession in general, but as containing information of which I should have been very sorry not to have been possessed on a subject of so much importance.

I have not at this moment sufficient time to enter at large into the question, but a very little reflection must I think immediately point out to you the utter impossibility in the present state of the country of adopting the measure you mention of increasing the wages to seamen, the expense of which would, from the great number at present borne, be an enormous increase to our disbursements already sufficiently burthensome. The measure itself in some points of view and at a more suitable season might possibly be capable of being adopted, with every good effect that it can promise, and without the various objections which would now present themselves. It might perhaps be made the means of drawing good seamen into the service at the beginning of a war and render less necessary the extravagant bounties which experience shews us are attended with many inconveniences. At this time no such expedient could be found, and I am most happy to hear that your suggestions have gone no further, as I am fully convinced that the public discussion of such a point, if it was to take place, would infallibly be productive of much mischief from the absolute impracticability of carrying into effect anything of the kind.

As the application from the captains appears by your letter to be a measure determined upon by them, and actually to have been under discussion to-day at Portsmouth, it is useless for me to say anything now upon it. I cannot, I own, help wishing that it had not at this period been brought forward, but I have full confidence in the temper and good disposition of the gentlemen concerned and that nothing improper or which might be attended with consequences unfavourable to the good of the service may arise.

The other subject, though undoubtedly one which we cannot but wish for a proper opportunity of giving some relief upon it, is however so very dangerous to be stirred, that I trust every one will see the propriety of not allowing it to be agitated on any account whatever.

Believe me, dear Sir, with great truth,

Your very obedient humble servant,

SPENCER.

The Honble. Captain Pakenham.

SPENCER TO THE KING¹

[Draft.]

Earl Spencer has the honour of informing your Majesty that in consequence of intelligence

¹ Since the middle of February petitions for an increase of pay had been received by Lord Howe at Bath. As they were anonymous he did not answer them. At the end of March Lord Bridport brought the Channel Fleet back to Spithead, when the seamen finding their petition unanswered proceeded to organise a general mutiny. When the danger leaked out, the Admiralty tried to frustrate it by an order to put to sea given on 16th April. The refusal of the ships to weigh was the beginning of the outbreak.

received in the course of yesterday and this morning from Portsmouth of representations from the companies of your Majesty's ships at Spithead on the very delicate subject of an increase of pay, which appears to have been brought forward and enforced in an unpleasant manner, he has, after consulting Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas, thought it his duty to go down thither immediately accompanied by two other members of the Board of Admiralty,¹ in order to take such measures as may appear the most advisable for putting a stop to, and if necessary, for redressing the grievance complained of without suffering the dissatisfaction which seems to have arisen to proceed any further. He forbears at this moment entering into any further detail on this subject on which he flatters himself he shall be enabled on his return to make a more particular and satisfactory report to your Majesty.

[*Endorsement* : 17th April, 1797. Draft to the King.]

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Wimbledon, 18th April, 1797.

My dear Lord,—It is impossible to get out of one's head the disagreeable business on which you are now engaged. What I am now suggesting I daresay must have occurred to yourselves, but that is no good objection to my taking the chance of writing what in any event may be of no use. This mutiny has been conducted so systematically I

¹ Charles George, Lord Arden, a Civil Lord, and Rear-Admiral Young, with Mr. Marsden, the second secretary. They left London at 5 P.M. on the 17th, and were at Portsmouth by noon next day. Gill, *The Naval Mutinies*, p. 30.

would not be surprised if the ringleaders have been beforehand with you in their correspondence with the other ports of the fleet, particularly at Plymouth. Whatever you settle, however, with regard to the crews under Lord Bridport, you will think it right, in giving information of what has been conceded by you, it should be sent directly and so speedily from yourself as to reach the other ports of the fleet before they hear of it from the mutineers. I am going to put a case which I trust is superfluous, I mean that of the demands of the mutineers being so unreasonable that you cannot comply with them. In that event I should still think it right to make the reasonable additions to the other parts of the fleet who have not asked it in a mutinous manner, and intimation of your having done so should be quickly made to them before they have asked it. I should think this would put them in good humour and separate their interests from that of the mutineers.

The Chancellor says he has sent a favourable answer to your request for a living.

Yours truly,

HENRY DUNDAS.

(Private. Received 19th April, 1797.)

CAPTAIN PAYNE¹ TO SPENCER

My Lord,—Weak as I have been, I could not help putting my thoughts upon paper that I

¹ The only officer on the lists of this name is Capt. John Willet Payne (posted 1780, rear-admiral 1799) who commanded the *Russell* on 1st June. At this time he had the *Impétueux*, one of Lord Bridport's squadron that had been cruising before Brest.

might make an offering of them to your lordship, on the present unhappy posture of our fleet. I meant to have shaped those loose thoughts, but as they are only meant for your own private eye, I cannot let slip the opportunity of your being upon the spot of sending them as they are. In testimony of respect and truth, with which I have the honour to be

Your most obedient and very faithful
humble servant,
W. PAYNE.

George Inn. Tuesday.
(Private. 18th April, 1797.)

ENCLOSURE TO CAPTAIN PAYNE'S LETTER

The character of the present mutiny is perfectly French. The singularity of it consists in the great secrecy and patience with which they waited for a thorough union before it broke out, and the immediate establishment of a *system of terror*. It cannot be dealt with like mutinies in individual ships. System and management must be met with the like, nor can any thing be executed with success till some *apparent* disunion is created in the fleet. They are perfectly sensible that their force arises from agreement, and the principle of it, *namely*, the increase of wages is so seductive that they cannot probably [be] divided thereon—though holding out the impropriety of increasing the lowest classes of seamen with the higher ones, would tend to spread difference of opinion, and call on the higher to keep down the claims of the lower orders. Irregularities will be sure to produce schisms, but delay may produce serious mischiefs. If any thing could be proposed that could satisfy

one ship only to express a satisfaction, it would run through the fleet with the exception of the Queen Charlotte, Royal George, and Royal Sovereign, which are seriously in revolt, and should certainly be punished, if possible in the most serious manner. The first might afterwards be sent to the West Indies. The disgust shewn by many ships at Spithead (though at present stifled) might be gradually fomented, and no means should be omitted to excite it. No deviation, however, has taken place among the crews on the original compact respecting wages. No assistance can be depended upon from the marines, who are recruits, and never had any habits of military life or discipline from the seamen, [who] are one class with them. This is one of the evils of keeping the establishment of that corps so low in peace. The mutinous state of the fleet is not the greatest enormity that prevails. It exercises executive functions. It stops convoys, directs their sailing, distributes orders to the fleet; and the frigates at sea, that have gone from hence, is by their direction, so that they not only throw off all obedience to the Admiralty, but usurp their authority. It is therefore a revolution of the fleet, and should be opposed with the whole vigour of the country. Parliament should come to animated resolutions on it, and the country be advised to address, particularly the trading towns, whose commercial interests must hereafter suffer (by the employment of these mutineers in the merchants' service) should the ringleaders be allowed to escape. If the fleet at Plymouth or elsewhere could be brought, jointly, to express their abhorrence of the proceedings of the first rates here in particular, without being called upon to give up their petition for the increase of wages, which might (if proper) be held

out to them at the same time, it might have the best possible effect, and partly remove the stain on the navy. I cannot help thinking that this should be accompanied with mounting mortars on the batteries and Fort Moncton, and as much appearance of vigorous preparation—this would alarm all the well disposed, who dread a civil conflict, on account of their families—all allotments might be stopped from this squadron, and they would rally round their officers. It is even worth while to procure the insertion of plain written papers in the *Star*, expressive of the indignation of the country, and to awaken the pride of the good seamen. There have, I know, been measures taken from the fleet to have no other paper sent off which is generally read. With grounds like this to act upon, much useful and effectual exertion might be made by the officers of the fleet, which would now be only misspent, and serve rather to raise suspicion and excite mischief in their respective ships, and cripple the influence which may be exercised hereafter, when exertions may be attempted with success.

Great assiduity should be used to explore the root of the existing evil, and the present irregular communication with the Queen Charlotte will throw light upon that subject hereafter, and the naval difficulties will never be thoroughly adjusted until the secret *Jacobin* springs that now direct it, are fairly disclosed and removed ; and our best security is, that the fleet is generally so well affected, that I have no fear of their embracing such doctrines when fairly exposed. It is necessary, however (in my humble opinion), that they should not be irritated, *immediately*, into any act of violence, by which they should be united on a more criminal and dangerous principle than the

present bond that unites them. I have no doubt of the vigour of the officers, when called into action, with anything of support.

LORD CAMELFORD TO SPENCER

My Lord,—Although the circumstance I am about to mention may not possibly be new to your lordship, yet I think it my duty to acquaint you that I have just learnt by mere accident of an intention to detain the Board of Admiralty in case they should venture on board any of the ships now in a state of mutiny.

I am, my Lord,

Your lordship's faithful and

humble servant,

CAMELFORD.¹

(From Portsmouth, 20th April, 1797.)

PITT TO SPENCER

Downing Street,

Thursday, Midnight, 20th April, 1797.

My dear Lord,—Before any letter can reach you, I think the business must have been brought to a point. At all events I see no ground to suggest anything new, and have no doubt in my mind of the propriety of your decision, and of the proposal mentioned in your letter of $\frac{1}{2}$ past three to-day.² I most anxiously hope it will

¹ Thomas Pitt, second Baron Camelford, had just passed lieutenant, having been twice discharged his ship for insubordination and having attempted to fight a duel with his first commander, Capt. Vancouver. He was first cousin, once removed, to William Pitt.

² This refers to the concession with regard to the demand for an increase of pay, which Lord Spencer and his Committee had promised on the forenoon of this day. Gill, p. 35.

produce the intended effect. The amount of the expense is comparatively of no consequence.

Yours most sincerely,
W. PITT.

SPENCER TO PITT

Portsmouth, 21st April, 1797,
½ past 3 P.M.

Dear Sir,—Four and twenty hours have now elapsed since my last letter to you, and though I have not the satisfaction of being able to state that the business is quite concluded in the brilliant manner in which I think it ought to have been, considering the very liberal extent of our concession, yet I hope that I am justified in assuring you that the mutiny is virtually at an end, though not quite so in appearance yet.

Our last order, of which I sent you the particulars in my yesterday's letter, was read this morning to all the ships by their respective captains, and the general report from all those whose reports have yet reached us is that it gave general satisfaction. They still, however, declined giving any outward and visible mark of their being satisfied till the delegates whom they had sent to the Queen Charlotte as such had agreed upon it. These delegates were sent to by Sir Alan Gardner, who wrote them a note representing that the several ships having expressed themselves perfectly satisfied, he called upon them to give him an answer immediately, as he intended in half an hour to make the signal for weighing. They returned for answer that they begged he would wait till two o'clock, when he should have their answer, and this officer learnt from the Queen Charlotte's captain that

her ship's company had expressed themselves equally satisfied with the rest, and that the delegates seemed only to hesitate upon the validity of the forgiveness and pardon which we held out to them, as they thought it must be given by the King himself. This Sir A. Gardner proposed to endeavour to explain to them, and we have not yet heard any further from him.

I clearly am of opinion that from the appearance of satisfaction which has manifested itself on board most of the ships at the proposal made to them, there will be no chance of further mischief even though the ringleaders should still continue to hesitate a little, most probably from fear; but if the officers will but exert themselves with sufficient energy and spirit, they will be forced to give up the point to what it is now apparent is the general wish of much the largest part, if not the whole, of the fleet.

[*Endorsed*: Draft of note to Mr. Pitt unfinished and never sent.]¹

*CAPTAIN PARR TO H. BROWNE, M.P.*²

Standard. Near Yarmouth, 27th April, 1797.

Dear Sir,—You are doubtless acquainted with the unpleasant circumstance which happened at Spithead with the seamen of the fleet there, and

¹ Sir A. Gardner's endeavour to explain matters to the Queen Charlotte was a disastrous failure and only increased the mutineers' suspicions that they were being tricked. They therefore refused to return to duty till they had a pardon under the King's hand, and Lord Spencer immediately left to procure it. Next day he, Pitt and the Lord Chancellor went down to Windsor to see the King, and this explains why the letter was never sent.

² Isaac Hawkins Browne the younger was member for Bridgnorth and a follower of Pitt's. Capt. Parr's ship, the *Standard* (64), was one of those which led the mutiny in Duncan's blockading squadron.

also with the means used of necessity to appease them. On reading to the ship's company under my command the grants made to them in consequence of their positive demand (I cannot call it anything else), the marines begged their captain (Macintosh) to signify it was their wish to speak to me, and the accompanying letter is the purport of their request.

Admiral Duncan, to whom my letter is addressed on the subject, does not choose to forward it to the Admiralty, but gives me leave to do so. I am divided what steps to take, the justice due to the marines on the one hand, demanding my attention; and the objection of Admiral Duncan—experienced, and highly respectful—commanding me, and whom I have a delight in obeying, on the other, leaves me in a situation, intricate and unpleasant. For should it meet Lord Spencer's disapprobation, he may very justly say it was my duty to abide by the determination of the Admiral. Should his lordship on the contrary approve it and think it a circumstance if made public which may tend to revive the drooping discipline of the navy, shook to its very foundation by this storm, it will be a pity to withhold it from him.

I therefore submit to your consideration, that if you think it might be presented to his lordship for his private information and mature deliberation, to dispose of as he may think best for the good of the kingdom, and that it will not be improper for you, Sir, to present it to his private knowledge for this purpose, I shall esteem it a favour if you will take this trouble, for in my opinion it would be an injustice to the marines, and prejudicial to the service, to suffer it to pass unnoticed.

The marines have ever been a separate body from the seamen. I have never known an instance of their having been concurred in a mutiny with them, and they are men which *we* look to in general for protection in such disagreeable situations; therefore the fear of separating the marines and seamen, is rather to be courted than dreaded, and this appears to be the opinion of most of my brother officers in this fleet.

My wish to save this post has rather hurried me, having only just now seen Admiral Duncan on the subject; therefore hope you will excuse my hasty conclusion, and allow me to remain, with respectful regards to you and Mrs. Browne,

Dear Sir,

Your ever obliged humble servant,

THOMAS PARR.

Hawkins Browne, Esq., M.P.

EDWARD NEWENHAM¹ TO SPENCER

My Lord,—I write this from a sick-bed, from whence, for these some days it was not expected I should arise alive, but finding myself able to write a few lines to your lordship, I take up my pen to acquaint your lordship:

That during my illness two friends of mine from the neighbourhood of Belfast came to see me—and gave the following information:

That both on the late and former trials they conversed with several of the *United rebels*, who were sentenced to be put on board ship, and that their common declarations were that they would

¹ Sir Edward Newenham was a prominent Irish politician of progressive views. He did not sit in the last Irish Parliament.

be of more service to *the cause* on board a man-of-war than they could be at present on land, for they would immediately form clubs, and swear every man to be true to each other. They meant to begin gently until they found themselves strong. I can rely on the veracity of my information.

I submit to your lordship that no more of these rebels should be sent on board the fleet, for one of them would poison 700 men. All that went took with them numbers of that rebellious paper, the *Northern Star*, and were sworn to that purpose of poisoning the minds of the sailors.

Permit a private individual, but a zealous friend to the royal navy, to submit his ideas to your lordship's superior judgment—which is—that all the delegates be promoted by degrees. The captains would in due time make them their particular friends, and get all *secrets* from them. Suppose half a dozen were made midshipmen, or any other office superior to the common rank.

We all wait for the result of their reply of the 22nd, as we are afraid, if not granted and they having declared that they will not lift an anchor until it is granted, the Brest fleet will be out with all their transports for this kingdom.

The cause must plead my excuse for offering my sentiments to your lordship, and I rest assured that your lordship will tell me so in your answer.

I have the honour to be, my Lord, with respect,

Your most faithful and obedient
humble servant,

EDWARD NEWENHAM.

28th April, 1797.

[*Endorsed* : 'Private,' and 'Answered 3rd May.']

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

1st May, 1797.

My Lord,—

You will see by my public letter of to-day what has happened on board here, in my own opinion occasioned by letters they had received from the Spithead ships got out in the Hazard cutter, and had been but two hours delivered to them. I will answer for it there will no more of it in the North Sea fleet. The ship's company saw too much determination in the officers supported by the marines to try it again.¹ For my own part have ever thought it impossible for a ship's company to get the better of their officers, and in my time have seen a stop put to mutinies more than once or twice by proper exertion. I will do justice to all my officers, and say I never saw more spirit or determination shewn on such an occasion.

I have the honour to be, with much respect,
my Lord,

Your lordship's most obedient
and humble servant,
ADAM DUNCAN.

Venerable, Yarmouth.

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

7th May, 1797.

My Lord,—I am honoured with your lordship's letter of the 2nd [instant]. On board here we

¹ The seamen of the Venerable on 30th April had given the usual mutinous cheers and demanded to know when the promised increase of pay and victuals would begin. The marines did not join them, and after the Admiral had called them aft and addressed them, the men returned to their duty.

have been remarkably quiet. I have given this ship's company a few lectures on their late behaviour, which I think they have profited by, for I never saw them more alert nor do their duty better. A report had gone about that the ships would not go to sea. I to-day put the question to this ship's company, as I thought it better it should be known before we put them to the trial ; their answer to a man was they ' would go to any part of the world with me,' and seemed most penitent for their past faults. Some other ships from the bad example of this have shewn a disposition to be troublesome, but it now seems all over and quietness reigns at present in the fleet. The bad weather has prevented me from visiting all the ships, which I shall do as soon as I can. It may be unprecedented to pay ships at other ports than where there is a commissioner, but don't believe the Act of Parliament says so ; indeed am of opinion one of the greatest grievances the navy labours under is not being paid at all places home and abroad. I did not say a word of my officers in my public letter, as in supporting me they only did their duty, but I assure your lordship they showed both activity and spirit. The Director is gone to the Nore. I hope she will get preference in fitting and soon join me again ; am sure nothing will be wanting on Captain Bligh's part, and his ship is one of my best sailers, and no ship can be in better order.¹ I find the coasting trade is constantly alarmed by our cruisers using enemy's colours. I shall give directions to my ships to leave it off. Possibly a general order from the

¹ Capt. William Bligh had been in command of the *Bounty* when she mutinied in 1789.

Board would be right, never to make use of false colours but to decoy such as appears enemy's.

I have to honour to be with respect, my Lord,

Your lordship's most obedient
and obliged humble servant,

ADAM DUNCAN.

Venerable, Yarmouth.

SPENCER TO THE KING

Earl Spencer has the deepest concern in laying before your Majesty the accompanying papers received this morning from Portsmouth and St. Helens, by which it appears that the unfortunate delusion under which the seamen and marines on board your Majesty's fleet have of late been acting is not yet removed by the very lenient and liberal conduct which has been held to them.¹ Earl Spencer hopes that the vote which will be passed this day in the Committee of Supply may prove satisfactory to their minds, and the most expeditious method will be taken of making it known to them. It will be necessary perhaps to take some further measure, but until your Majesty's confidential servants have been enabled by some particular information to come to a determination what advice to offer to your Majesty on the subject, Earl Spencer will not presume to offer any opinion of his own upon it.

Admiralty, 8th May, 1797.

¹ The mutiny broke out again at St. Helens on Sunday morning, 7th May, owing to the men believing that the promises made by the Admiralty were not binding until they were ratified by Act of Parliament.

THE KING TO SPENCER

Queen's House, 9th May, 1797.

50 minutes past 7 o'clock.

I cannot sufficiently express my concern at the account received last evening from Earl Spencer of the fresh mutiny in the Channel fleet, which is accompanied by more serious outrages than the first. It would be idle to lament that the measures for increasing their pay have been delayed for two weeks coming forward in Parliament, or that the wind has proved easterly which would have carried them out to sea. It is very difficult to decide what can with any degree of propriety be now proposed ; but shall certainly be at home by half hour past two to receive the opinion that may come from the Cabinet by four, that no minute may be lost in putting any measure that may be thought necessary into execution. If I could fix on any idea that seemed proper I should not have failed to have communicated it to Earl Spencer.

GEORGE, R.

JOHN WHITE TO SPENCER

Monday Evening.

My dear Sir,—With a mind agitated in the extreme from the confusion that yesterday took place at St. Helens and Spithead, the recollection of what I owe you could only induce me to address you at this painful moment. The ineffectual stand made by the officers of the London you must have heard of before this can possibly reach London. The particulars of that melancholy event we only learnt from seeing one of her boats

towed past us with wounded men and officers going to the hospital, and from the postman, who assured us that the quarter-deck was, when he left her, as much stained with blood as if the ship had just come out of action. All we had heard, soon after was confirmed by the delegates coming on board the Royal William after having confined poor old Admiral Colpoys, his captain and one or two other officers on board the London.¹ In my lifetime I never saw such want of discretion as in *these* said delegates. Instead of sober steady men whom I expected to have seen, they really were drunken ignorant creatures, neither governed by sense (though uncultivated) nor anything else that could even give a colour to their proceedings, so that I am clearly of opinion that were their most sanguine wishes gratified even in their own idea, all would not do because they are now goaded on by *devils* who nothing but the destruction of their devoted country will suffice. Indeed, Sir, things are now come to such a pass, that I should not be at all surprised to find every officer who does his duty turned on shore, as has been the case with Captain Nichols and his first lieutenant.² In the frigates and smaller vessels, as in the Royal William, these delegates were beginning grievances where none existed. Therefore what may be looked for from the events that have taken place and the spirit and temper of the times, God only

¹ Admiral Colpoys's flagship the London was at Spithead, and he had endeavoured by force to prevent communication with delegates coming from St. Helens, but was obliged to give in when the marines threw down their arms. The First Lieutenant Power who with other officers had fired on the crew narrowly escaped hanging. The flag-captain was Edward Griffiths.

² Capt. Henry Nichols of the Marlborough had a bad reputation for tyranny and violence. It is doubtful whether he was quite sane. Shortly afterwards he committed suicide in the waiting-room of the Admiralty. Gill, p. 271.

knows. While I am writing this the boats of the London, manned and armed, are alongside with an Admiral's tender taking all our seamen along with them to St. Helens, where from some hints it is feared they intend executing some one. The rigorous confinement of poor Admiral Colpoys has occasioned many fears on his account. The delegates have this instant come on board and put this ship's company in possession of the magazine and arms of every kind. Something has been found among Admiral Colpoys's papers, which are all in the hands of the crew, that has determined his fate, I truly fear, as well as his captain's. One of the delegates declared to me that he would certainly suffer, and that there would not be an English man-of-war belonging to the Crown this day fortnight. The London has now, as she is standing into the fleet at St. Helens, a white flag at the main, which chills our blood, lest it should be for the execution. I start this out of the ship.

Yours most truly,
JOHN WHITE.

They are leaving most of the officers out of the ships at St. Helens. Holloway, Hood and one or two others have reached the shore.¹

LORD ARDEN² TO SPENCER

My Lord,—Finding that the measures thought fit to be pursued upon the present situation of the fleet (which situation forms the most awful crisis that these kingdoms ever saw) are what I

¹ Capt. Alexander Hood of the Mars, Capt. Holloway of the Duke.

² See *ante*, p. 110, note.

can not bring my mind to think such as the circumstances require; and having without effect endeavoured to state my opinion upon them, I hope it will not be thought arrogant in me so to have done, and considering the share I have had in the late transactions to have differed in judgment from those for whom I have the highest personal respect. But the subject affects me in a manner that makes it appear to my mind paramount to all other considerations—involving in it my duty to my King, my country and my posterity. I have therefore to entreat the favour of your lordship to make known to his Majesty that it is my earnest desire to be allowed to retire immediately from a situation which I have now, by his favour, had the honour of holding above thirteen years, and in which during the time of your lordship's presiding at the Board I have received many personal marks of kindness for which I shall always feel myself obliged.¹

I have the honour to be, with great respect,
my Lord,

Your lordship's faithful humble servant,
ARDEN.

Admiralty, 10th May, 1797.

MEMORANDUM AS TO MUTINY IN FLEET

11th May, 1797.

If the present disturbances and mutiny do not subside, I apprehend no one will doubt of the

¹ According to the official Admiralty List Lord Arden had joined the Board with the Earl of Chatham in 1788. His belief that he had already served thirteen years appears therefore to be an error. His resignation was not accepted, and he continued to serve till Lord Spencer went out of office in February 1801.

indispensable necessity of some solemn interference of Parliament.

If, as there is at present much reason to hope, the mutiny should soon be at an end, my anxious wish is that his Majesty should acquaint both Houses of Parliament therewith, and inform them that every reasonable concession has been made and confirmed to the seamen and marines of his fleet; that in consequence thereof he trusts in their loyalty and attachment so far as to believe that nothing of the same kind can ever take place in future; but that if unfortunately he should be disappointed in that respect, then it is his determination to make use of all the powers entrusted to him by the Constitution to enforce obedience and to punish such high offences to the utmost extent of the laws in force against them.

In return for this communication, that both Houses of Parliament should join in an address to the King to thank him for his message and to express their opinion that what had been done by his Majesty ought to satisfy and content the seamen and marines of his fleet and to fill their hearts with gratitude towards him; to express their firm trust and reliance that they would never again so far forget their allegiance to his Majesty and their duty to their country as to raise those scenes of tumult and disorder which have lately disgraced the service; but that if unfortunately they should ever again be induced so far to depart from their duty, to express their confidence that his Majesty would make use of all the powers entrusted to him by the Constitution to enforce obedience and to punish such offences, and to assure his Majesty that his Parliament would be ready zealously to co-operate with his Majesty in any measures that might be necessary to that effect.

It is hoped that there can be little doubt that in such a measure as this all parties would join, and it cannot be doubted that it would have much weight with the fleet, and it would shut out all prospect of any further concessions to further unreasonable demands, which all who know what has passed at Portsmouth and the many objects still floating in the minds of those men, must dread may yet be made, even if the present storm subsides, and a calm should once again prevail from the effects of the Act of Parliament and this second pardon;¹ and surely there is nothing unconstitutional in this, nor any improper disclosure of correspondence, or circumstances necessary to enable Parliament to take such a step.

No one can imagine that the writer of this means this as anything more than an outline submitting the terms and wording it to much better judgments than his own, but humbly recommending the utmost solemnity in the whole proceeding.

SERGEANT ADAIR TO SPENCER

11th May. Six, Morning.

Sergeant Adair has infinite pleasure in communicating the following extract of a letter from his son, at Portsmouth dated *quarter past eleven last night*, the bearer of which stopped his chaise, about four miles from town:

‘Information is come that everything is

¹ Lord Howe had been sent down with the King’s Pardon for the second mutiny. He arrived on the 11th, and the men returned to duty the same day.

settled ; even the most mutinous ships have returned to their duty. The fleet will sail immediately, that is (I suppose) as soon as officers are appointed, for some have set them all on shore. The reason of my sending this by express is lest the very alarming information I had given you by the former might induce you to take measures, which in the present turn of affairs might have injured Griffiths.' ¹

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

14th May, 1797.

My Lord,— I am happy to hear by your lordship's letter I was honoured with yesterday that there is a prospect of all being settled at Portsmouth, and now will have no doubt this fleet will have the credit of continuing quiet, though there has been in some of the ships every appearance of going wrong ; I have had use for all my exertions to keep them right. The *Adamant* has given me more trouble than any of them, though must do Captain Hotham the justice to say he has acted with much spirit and propriety. As that ship was in Admiral Onslow's Division, I sent him to try what was to be done. He came and told me they were quite refractory, though in appearance without cause, but they had taken it in their heads, right or wrong, the surgeon should be put on shore, and though they were pleased with Captain Hotham,

¹ Capt. E. Griffiths of the *London*, who after Admiral Colpoys's attempt to suppress the second mutiny by force, had been imprisoned with the Admiral by the mutineers and threatened with death. Serjeant Adair took a prominent part in shaping the bill for preventing seduction of seamen and fomenting sedition in the fleet, which was hurried through the House of Commons during the first three days of June. Gill, p. 206.

if he continued to support him they would insist on his leaving them also. Finding this ill-humour was not likely to subside, went on board yesterday myself, and after expostulating with them on the very unreasonable demand they had made, and the inhumanity of not only depriving an innocent man of his character, but also of bread for himself and family, at the same time told them, could they bring proof of what was alleged, I would immediately order an enquiry to be made; at the same time told them, by the result of that enquiry they must abide. I then desired such as had complaints to come forward. One or two appeared, but their complaints was so lame they give it up, and all was settled to both our satisfaction, and they assured me they would shew me by their attention to their duty how much they were so. At that moment it occurred to me that directing my flag to be hoist on board them for the evening would please them. It had a good effect and thought should have lasted, my leaving with the repeated huzzas. They are as stout a body of men as I ever saw, and were half of them put on board another ship it would be better for them. Indeed they seemed desirous to part, and I really believe the good wish to leave the others. I fear there are too many of them from the other side the water.

I have the honour to be, with respect,

Your lordship's obedient and

obliged humble servant,

ADAM DUNCAN.

P.S.—The man, William Gunby, mentioned in the Duke of Roxburgh's memorandum, is now on board the Ardent, and bears a good character from Captain Burges, though have no doubt the

Quota men have been at the bottom of all this and put on by designing men.¹

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

17th May, 1797.

My Lord,—I am honoured with your lordship's letter of the 15th. Am sure your time is too much taken up to answer my letters but those of great importance. I write you everything that occurs as you seem to wish me to do, but I beg unless answers are very necessary you would not put yourself to any trouble to write to me. It is now with much pleasure I can almost assure you we shall keep all right in this fleet. In Admiral Onslow's report yesterday of the ships he had visited he found the *Repulse* much dissatisfied and a mutinous spirit appeared amongst them. In the afternoon an officer came from Captain Alms to say they refused to take wine and that they would have all spirits. My particular orders was they should, as the other ships had half wine and half spirits, and that I would come on board in the morning. After a long conversation I was lucky enough to satisfy them that what they desired was most unreasonable, and we parted very good friends with huzzaing, and they told me they would follow wherever I went. I also went to the *Trent*, but on

¹ The mutinies, or at least their excellent organisation, were very generally attributed to the quota-men. By an Act of March 1795 all counties had to provide a quota of men for the navy in proportion to population. In April another Act extended this obligation to the chief seaports. The local authorities consequently had to give various inducements to get men to come forward, including very high bounties. They also took the opportunity of getting rid of their undesirables. The result was that the ships were filled with landmen of bad character and broken men of good education, who were able to teach the discontented seamen a good deal that they did not know. Richard Parker himself was a quota-man. See *post*, p. 169.

Captain Bowater's telling me they were all most penitent and promised obedience, all was settled. The little Albatross had the impudence to appear mutinous, and attempted to prevent Captain Scott's confining a man that was so to him. He got his officers together and, though the marines left him, they got the better of those, cut down some, and reduced the rest to obedience, and is this day gone to sea. I am sorry to find the marines are not in many of the ships so steady as they should be. I have a sad account from Sheerness. I cannot help thinking there is some persons of more designing dispositions than our 'Johns' at the bottom of all this. I am sure I feel much for you in all this; God Almighty enable you to go through with it.

I have the honour to be, with much respect,
my Lord,

Your lordship's obedient and
obliged humble servant,
ADAM DUNCAN.

Venerable, Yarmouth.

LORD LOUGHBOROUGH¹ TO SPENCER

Friday, 8 A.M.

My dear Lord,—The pardon which Lord Howe carried to Portsmouth cannot be applied to the case of the seamen at Sheerness, because it can only extend to acts done prior to the publication of it by Lord Howe, and also because it only relates to acts of mutiny.² Now the offences committed at Sheer-

¹ Lord Chancellor.

² The mutiny at the Nore broke out on 12th May, the day after Howe read the pardon to the Channel Fleet, amongst a dozen ships (including three of the line and seven cruisers) that belonged to no fleet but were under the flag of the port-admiral, Vice-Admiral Buckner. The violent acts alleged in the letters were true.

ness are subsequent to Lord Howe's notification, and some of them seem to amount to high treason. If it is true that the seamen have stopped the trade, fired shot at the *St. Fiorenzo*, and compelled the frigates to remain at the Nore in defiance of the order for their removal to Gravesend, they are guilty of levying war against the King. I conceive therefore that a new and more extensive pardon must be issued upon this case, and I should hope that some part at least of the difficulty arises from a distrust of Admiral Buckner's authority to give them a sufficient pardon.

I mention this idea to your lordship, because you may probably think it expedient to have a sign manual for a new pardon before the King returns to-day to Windsor, and I shall desire the Attorney-General to prepare a draft of it.

I ever am, my dear Lord,

Yours most sincerely,

LOUGHBOROUGH.

(26th May, 1797. Received and answered same day.)

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

26th May, 1797.

My Lord,—By the orders I received yesterday, as the wind is westerly, should have remained here, but from what happened last night shall go out, if it is for a short time, as the only way to keep us right here. Cheering was heard on board the *Lion* yesterday evening soon after the signal was made for everybody to repair on board. This morning I found delegates had been sent from that ship to the *Standard* and both ships had joined. They then attempted to send to the

Glatton and Belliqueux ; both ships, much to the credit of their captains and ship's company, rejected them with disdain ; told them they had no grievances. The Lion men went so far as to threaten they would fire into the Glatton ; the answer was most spirited from the Glatton's forecastle—the sooner they fired the better, and they knew well enough they were not mutinous, they could fire as fast as them. To be determined how we stood, I called the captains on board ; in their presence spoke to the Venerable's ship's company, who all agreed to stand by me, to support the dignity of my flag, &c. ; I then desired the captains to go on board and know the real state of their ship's company. They all agreed they would go to sea and act with the fleet against the common enemy ; some went further, except the Nassau, who until they were paid would not move. I have therefore directed Admiral Onslow to hoist his flag in the Adamant. This moment have had messages from the Lion and Standard saying they were sorry for what had happened, and they would with cheerfulness obey and follow me wherever I went ; but, my Lord, they, I find, are not to be depended on ; that they will face the enemy, doubt not, but if I am not much mistaken, this sad business has taken too deep a root to be soon got the better of, as I fear you'll find when the Western fleet returns.¹

I have the honour to be, most respectfully,

Your lordship's obedient and

obliged humble servant,

Venerable.

ADAM DUNCAN.

¹ By this he means Lord Bridport's fleet which had been taken to sea on 17th May. There was no serious recrudescence of the mutiny, except in the case of one ship, the *Pompée*. See *post*, p. 159.

SPENCER TO THE KING

Earl Spencer has the honour of laying before your Majesty the result of deliberations of your Majesty's confidential servants on the subject of the mutinous fleet at the Nore, together with a declaration grounded on it for your Majesty's Royal signature. What may be the effect of this measure, it is hardly possible to conjecture in the present very unsettled state of the seamen's minds ; but Earl Spencer thinks it his duty to assure your Majesty that no consideration could have prevailed upon him to contribute towards placing so high an authority as that of your Majesty's commission for executing the office of Lord High Admiral in so humiliating a situation but the extreme and urgent necessity of the case, and its being accompanied by an express determination not to add to the concessions already made.

Earl Spencer proposes going down to Chatham this evening and being at Sheerness to-morrow morning.¹

Admiralty, 27th May, 1797, $\frac{1}{2}$ past 3 P.M.

THE KING TO SPENCER

Windsor, 27th May, 1797.
51 minutes past 5 P.M.

I have received from Earl Spencer the minute of Cabinet recommending a sign manual, and directions for a Board of Admiralty to repair to Sheerness, but under the express determination

¹ Spencer, Arden, Young and Marsden were again the Committee. They left immediately after the Cabinet meeting, slept at Rochester, and reached Sheerness next morning. Gill, p. 151.

not to add to the concessions already made, which has made me without hesitation sign it and return it to him.

GEORGE, R.

SAME TO SAME

Queen's House, 27th May, 1797.
50 minutes past 7 o'clock.

The business before the Cabinet last night was of so serious a nature that I am not surprised a final decision was not come to. The sending in the meantime to Admiral Duncan at Yarmouth was a right step, as I fear coercive measures must be taken to restore any discipline in the ships at the Nore. I am certain, if that should become necessary, that Earl Spencer will take every means to keep the officers of those ships on shore that no misfortune may attend them in the pursuing the measures which cannot be avoided.

GEORGE, R.

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

27th May, 1797.

My Lord,—Your lordship will see by my letter to the Admiralty how the Montague's ship's company has behaved after their protestations yesterday, that they would follow my flag where ever it went. The reason they give is perfectly frivolous ; more than half the ships with me have more pay due. Sorry am I to repeat there is no dependence on any of us, I fear. I judged the best thing I could do was to put to sea, and shall while the wind continues westerly keep near the coast to receive any commands you may have for me. The Western fleet has much to answer for ; they

have lighted up a flame that all their art will not suddenly quench, or I mistake it. Am sorry to find the marines in most ships have joined the seamen and those on board the *Standard* who behaved so well have turned their captain out of the ship, and he is at present with me. Although I still keep up my spirits and hope things will take a better turn, am almost fatigued to death, and cannot hold it long; yet have never met with any personal insult; on the contrary, if the ship's company are to be believed, they never will suffer that, but have seen enough to have little dependence on them; and have only further to say that I am sorry that I have lived to see the pride of Britain disgrace the very name of it. When I this morning passed the Russian ships they shewed me every mark of respect and attention, indeed they have done so ever since we came together.¹ Admiral Onslow used every argument with the *Nassau's* ship's company and acted with great propriety to get them to go to sea, but to no purpose. I have known the time when the name of an enemy would have raised a ship's company to every exertion, and put aside every grievance through zeal to get to them. I fear those days are past; it is a severe trial, but hope all will be for the best, and trust in God it may turn out so.

I always have the honour to be, with gratitude and respect, my Lord,

Your lordship's obedient very
humble servant,
ADAM DUNCAN.

Venerable, off Yarmouth.

¹ A Russian squadron of ten of the line and four cruisers had been sent under Vice-Admiral Makarov, to co-operate with our North Sea fleet. Schomberg, iv. p. 595.

SIR J. BORLASE WARREN¹ TO SPENCER

PRIVATE.

My Lord,—I did not write to your lordship sooner, because it was necessary to see what course the present fever in the ships here might take. My public letter of this post will explain all that has passed hitherto. I have been obliged to undergo many trials of patience and condescension, and have experienced all the mummary of being chaired. My men, being the first to return to their duty, have incurred the guilt of not being violent enough ; they have likewise been alarmed at the idea of my leaving them. The ship gets forward, and perhaps matters may go on tolerably well, but the example of the *Galatea* is dreadful. I had revolved in my mind the prospect before me, as well as a retrospect of what has passed ; and was upon the point of writing to your lordship when your letter arrived.

I had considered it right to state to you more in the light of a friend than in a public situation, that I cannot well consistent with my feelings have much to say with Lord Bridport, or covet being under his command, after the famous proofs I have had of his displeasure.

If, therefore, my Lord, it were possible to have such a ship of the line as the *Leviathan* upon the Falmouth station, it would be a very pleasant circumstance ; provided she were completed from *La Pomone*, allowing the boatswain and purser to accompany me. I could then act with the frigates as usual ; and if it should meet with the approbation of the Board, to cruise off Cape Ortegal

¹ Commodore Warren with his broad pennant in *La Pomone* had been commanding one of the cruiser squadrons on the coast of France. See vol. i. *passim*. He was now refitting at Plymouth.

should be of more use than off Brest ; except when the fleet were in Torbay. I submit this to your lordship's judgment, as I could wish to do all that is possible to be of use ; but something is due to myself in the present crisis ; and I must be near my family who have a stake in the country. Any command in these days is an arduous and difficult task, and not a very enviable one. The idea of being kept with Lord Bridport throws a gloom over all the Falmouth squadron ; and otherwise, after having been four years absent from my own affairs, I should do better to retire at the present moment. The seamen are now drunk and disorderly, and some have been committed ; but perhaps in a day or two they may be tired and return to their duty on board their respective ships : I fear *from observation, however*, fresh requests will be made when the peace is declared.

I should be happy to receive a line from your lordship.

I have the honour to remain, with much respect and regard,

Your lordship's sincere

humble servant,

JOHN BORLASE WARREN.

Plymouth Docks, 27th May, 1797.

P.S.—The seamen and marines of all the ships have been on shore since the day before yesterday from the harbour.

(Answered 12th June.)

NEPEAN TO SPENCER

$\frac{1}{2}$ past 4 o'clock, Sunday.

Captain Bligh has just now returned ; the Admiral had sailed before his arrival. I send

the memorandum he has made. He can give no account of the Admiral's notions or intentions ; they are, however, explained in his letters. He says he was afraid to send out the letters to the Admiral to his rendezvous.

My letter of last night will in all probability be sent out in the Stork.

I send your lordship what has been received from Colonel Brownrigg.¹ The measure which the Duke of York has directed eventually to be taken by Colonel Nesbitt was settled on a conference with Mr. Pitt, Mr. Dundas, and Lord Grenville this morning ; and Lord Cornwallis² has since been desired to erect a battery to bring the Lancaster to reason if matters should terminate unfavourably at Sheerness.

The French newspapers state that Porto Rico has been captured.

[*Endorsed* : 28th May, 1797. From Mr. Nepean.]

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

28th May, 1797.

My Lord,—I have just received the Admiralty letter by a messenger. By what I have seen, as I wrote you before, we are not to be depended on. The Montague would not sail, and I thought to have remained at anchor about four leagues from the land quiet, but find that will not do. By a message from the *Belliqueux*, just as the messenger arrived, find her crew in great disorder, and

¹ Afterwards Sir Robert Brownrigg, who conquered the kingdom of Kandy. At this time he was Military Secretary to the Duke of York.

² Master-General of the Ordnance. Colonel Nesbitt was in command at Tilbury Fort.

determined to send boats on board the *Lion*, for what purpose know not, but am sure for no good. Have therefore made the signal to weigh and stand out to sea. To-morrow shall try with Admiral Onslow and captains what is to be done and let you know ; but, I again say, fear nothing will bring them to act against each other.¹

I have no more to say at present, but have the honour to be, with much respect,

Your lordship's obedient
humble servant,

ADAM DUNCAN.

9 o'clock P.M.

P.S.—The *Belliqueux* has made the signal of inability to weigh, but shall stand off till to-morrow with the ships that will follow me.

NEPEAN TO SPENCER

My dear Lord,—I lost no time in communicating to Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas the contents of your lordship's letter of this morning, and they have since been anxiously expecting some further accounts from Sheerness. The Duke of York who read your lordship's letter mentioned the substance of it to the King.

Though I have nothing material to communicate, I have sent down another messenger that your lordship may be furnished with an expeditious means of sending to town if the telegraph should not favour your communications.

The Lancaster remained quiet to-day and no attempt has been made to stir. The *Agincourt* and *Naiad* have continued orderly.

¹ All these ships deserted Duncan when he put to sea.

The Intrepid has refused to go to sea until leave for twenty-four hours has been given to the crew to go on shore; this permission will, however, be refused.¹

Believe me to be, with firm respect,
Your lordship's faithful
humble servant,
EVAN NEPEAN.

Admiralty. Monday night, 12 o'clock.

I understand Harvey has taken four sail-of-the-line at Porto Rico, at least such is reported by the French papers as the intelligence from Madrid.²

SPENCER TO THE KING

Earl Spencer takes the earliest moment after his return to town to acquaint your Majesty that notwithstanding some favourable appearances in the course of yesterday which seemed to indicate a leaning on the part of the seamen at the Nore to return to their duty, he was nevertheless at length obliged to quit Sheerness last night without having effected that desirable purpose, as they absolutely refused to accept of your Majesty's

¹ The Intrepid was a frigate whose crew had had no leave since the beginning of the war. She was now under orders to escort an East Indian convoy, and the crew had been promised forty-eight hours' leave by Lord Howe. She sailed eventually without the promise having been kept. The other ships mentioned were lying in Long Reach. The Agincourt, the majority of whose crew were against mutiny, had been the last ship to desert Duncan.

² In February an expedition under Rear-Admiral Henry Harvey and Lieut.-General Sir Ralph Abercromby had taken Trinidad. In the course of the operations three Spanish ships-of-the-line were burnt and one taken. A subsequent attack on Porto Rico was unsuccessful.

most gracious pardon, except upon the condition of the Board of Admiralty agreeing to the additional demands which they had lately brought forward. Earl Spencer has the honour to lay before your Majesty the several papers which passed on this subject while the Board of Admiralty were at Sheerness, and humbly entreats your Majesty to pardon the rough state in which some of them appear in consequence of the great pressure in point of time. Among them your Majesty will find a letter from Earl Spencer himself to Mr. Nepean, which will more fully explain to your Majesty the measures which it appeared indispensably necessary to adopt yesterday evening with respect to the defence of Sheerness in case the mutineers should be desperate enough to make any attack upon it.

Your Majesty will at the same time receive the dispatches which have reached the Admiralty from Admiral Duncan and Lord St. Vincent.

Admiralty, 30th May, 1797.

THE KING TO SPENCER

Queen's House, 30th May, 1797.
18 minutes past 8 P.M.

I am sorry to find the humiliating step of a Board of Admiralty being themselves the bearers of the pardon I had prepared has not had its due effect ; but I highly approve that no concessions have been made to the mutinous ships ; I trust all must now see that vigour with temper can alone restore discipline in the fleet, and the steps now taken will I trust in a little time bring the men to a sense of their duty, and that the preventing

their getting fresh water will soon oblige them to submit.

I have persuaded the Prince of Wurtemberg, in consequence of the accounts of the Dutch fleet, to put off his journey to Harwich, but I have no hopes of getting him to prolong it farther ; I therefore hope cutters will watch whether the Dutch fleet are still in the Texel, and that Admiral Duncan may be able to protect the passage of the frigates to Cuxhaven.

GEORGE, R.

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

30th May, 1797.

My Lord,—Am very sorry to give the account your lordship will see of my squadron by my public letter. How the ships are deluded is more than I can say. The day before I sailed I desired every captain to turn their people up and ask them if they were willing to sail ; all give the most unequivocal answer they would follow the flag wherever it went, except the Nassau, who give their not being paid for a reason,¹ which although I thought a bad one when the fleet was going over to look for the enemy, was obliged to give way, finding from a second letter this ship's company wrote to me, though nothing should shake their fidelity to me, yet they hoped never to be obliged to draw their swords against other ships ; in short, I understood in such service could not depend on them. I need not express what I have suffered, as I am sure your lordship's situation must be much more unpleasant.

¹ The Nassau had not been paid for nineteen months.

Yesterday the Garland joined me ; am sure by what Captain Douglas says there are not above fourteen sail-of-the-line ready at the Texel, and had my fleet kept true to me, we should have been perfectly able to keep them in check. Still I trust matters will take a more favourable turn, and that some of the ships will join me. As the wind is to the northward, shall stand over and look into the Texel in hopes the appearance of the enemy's fleet may in some degree restore any small particle that remains of British spirit. God grant it.

I have to return you my best thanks for your obliging letter of the 26th and for your promoting Lieutenant Duncan. 'I have no doubt he will be found worthy of it. I shall be happy, if in the next letter, to hear all matters are settled, and that the fleet may once more resume its former character, which I will say has had a deadly blow.

I have the honour to remain, with gratitude and respect, my Lord,

Your lordship's obedient servant,

ADAM DUNCAN.

Venerable, Yarmouth.

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

1st June, 1797.

My Lord,—On the day I last had the honour to write your lordship all the squadron left me but the Adamant, and I hear they are gone to the Nore. This seems to be the most determined act of rebellion ever was known, and a want of spirit unknown in the British navy when going to look for the enemy, which they all well know. It seems astonishing in all this business the good men, for I am sure there are many such in every

ship, are afraid to come forward and speak their minds. On the ships leaving me, the Venerable ship's company sent me a deputation to say whatever happened they would stick by me. At the same time I found there were bad men amongst them which on no account they would name, but they all agreed they would not break their word to me. The only request they had to make, for they had no grievances, was that I would keep them from the disaffected ships till all was settled. Shall therefore continue off the Texel and make up as well as I can for the want of my fleet by making a number of signals as if the fleet was in the offing. I shall from time to time change my flag for deception, a humiliating situation to my former one. I was close in and saw, I think, about twelve sail-of-the-line, eight frigates, some of them large, and a great crowd of other ships and vessels to the amount of ninety-five, amongst them a number of merchant vessels that are always there. They seem to have got two ships from the New Deep, as only three are there. I never was closer in. As the wind favoured going along the shore, I was not a mile from the break in the land. The Adamant is with me, and seems in perfect order, but have had no communication with Admiral Onslow, nor shall I if possible till I hear better news.¹ That ship's company, as you will remember, was one of the worst at Yarmouth; but they gave me their word they would follow me wherever I went, and they have kept to it, and I also suppose they have a pride in supporting the flag. I really feel much for your lordship in all this distress, nor can I see the end of it; for I fear when one part is settled it will again break out in another. Could

¹ Admiral Onslow had shifted his flag to the Adamant when the Montague refused to weigh.

the Western fleet be brought, as they began and had all they asked for, to bring the others in order, it might have some effect, but I much dread we are too far gone ever to settle again till dispersed. I fear there are some designing people at the bottom of this.

I have the honour to remain, with perfect respect,

Your lordship's obedient and
obliged humble servant,
ADAM DUNCAN.

Venerable, at sea.

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

5th June, 1797.

My Lord,—I have the honour to acquaint your lordship that yesterday evening was joined by the *Sans-Pareil* and *Russell*, which has put me quite in spirits again.¹ With the force I have now, should the Dutch fleet come out they shall not pass un-noticed; am every moment in hopes of seeing more ships from Portsmouth, and with them it would give me double pleasure to give the Dutch a thrashing without the aid of those scoundrels that have so shamefully deserted me, particularly after the promises they gave. God, I hope, will forgive me, but I fear shall never be able to bring myself to forgive them. I esteem the captains, and yet, for all that, wish some of those ships may

¹ Mr. Gill gives reasons for believing these two ships came from Yarmouth, and that they did not sail till the 5th. But by Schomberg's lists both belonged to Sir Roger Curtis's squadron which on being relieved off Brest by Lord Bridport had come in to Spithead. His junior flag-officer, Lord Hugh Seymour, was in the *Sans-Pareil*. They may, however, have touched at Yarmouth for orders. All the rest of Curtis's squadron, six ships of the line, making eight in all, were under orders for the North Sea.

be sent on some other service than in the North Sea. I have enclosed some intelligence to the Admiralty from the coast of Norway. I wrote Admiral Young by the last cutter I sent in. Fearing you might not be on the spot I have desired this might be opened by Mr. Nepean in your absence.

I have the honour to be, with perfect respect,

Your lordship's obedient and
faithful humble servant,

ADAM DUNCAN.

Venerable.

P.S.—My ship's company seems perfectly happy with the part they have acted.

PITT TO SPENCER

Downing Street. Wednesday, 7 P.M.

[7th June, 1797.]

My dear Lord,—In thinking over the circumstances respecting the ships at the Nore, I cannot help thinking it very probable that if the buoys being taken up prevent them going away, their next idea may be to force their passage up the river.¹ At all events every precaution certainly ought to be taken against such an attempt, and it is suggested to me that a chain and boom laid across the river near Tilbury and Gravesend would have a great effect in obstructing the passage. You will easily have means of learning how far this is practicable. If it is, the preparatory measures ought not to be delayed, as probably if any attempt is made by the mutineers it will be

¹ Orders for removal of navigation marks had been issued by Order in Council on 6th June, that is, the day before. Gill, p. 196, *note*.

on the first occasion that the tide serves after the term of fifty-four hours from this morning is expired.¹

Yours sincerely,
W. PITT.

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

8th June, 1797.

My Lord,—I did myself the honour to write your lordship yesterday. Soon after the wind came to the N.E., I stood in and anchored with my four ships in such a situation, if the Dutch fleet attempt to sail, expect to give them a very material check. I shall remain at anchor till the wind change; by that time expect to be joined by the Portsmouth ships. Their very appearance will be a check to the Dutch, and hope you will be in perfect safety from an attack in this quarter. What a fine ship the *Sans-Pareil* is; a few such ships would be a fleet against the Dutch. I shall be glad to hear my scoundrels are come to their senses again, and that the gentlemen delegates will be pleased to let them come to sea again; am sure it will give me much satisfaction to hear some of them are hanged, as they deserve. The army seems to have behaved nobly.² As to our

¹ On the 6th at 3 P.M. the mutineers had sent the following ultimatum: 'To Capt. Lord Northesk, You are hereby authorised and ordered to wait upon the King . . . with the resolutions of the committee of delegates; and are directed to return back with the answer within 54 hours. R. Parker, President.' Schomberg, iii. 28. The idea of the boom was to prevent the ships at the Nore and Sheerness from joining those in Long Reach. On the 9th the Ordnance Board reported to the Navy Board that the idea of a similar boom had been abandoned in 1795, and that it would take a fortnight to prepare a new one. Gill, p. 195.

² For the military measures taken, see Gill, p. 197.

service, it will be long before they will rub this blot. My ship's company and the *Adamant's* have behaved well, and am happy to hear more ships have withstood every temptation. The delegates seem strict disciplinarians, and if we was to adopt some of their regulations it would not be amiss. Am in hopes we soon shall see better times, and that all this is only given as a warning not to put our only trust in armies or navies, and think we shall profit by it. I fear you will say the Admiral is turned Methodist; yet I think I know enough of your lordship's character to believe you will put a better construction on it. May God Almighty ever support you in all difficulties.

I have the honour to be, with truth and respect, my Lord,

Your lordship's obedient and
faithful humble servant,
ADAM DUNCAN.

Venerable, at anchor off the Texel.

CAPTAIN DIXON¹ TO SPENCER

Gorgon, Woolwich. 9th June, 1797.

My Lord,—As the services of every individual should come forth at this critical period, I therefore offer mine in the way that appears to me most conducive to the public welfare; and for which proposal I solicit your lordship's pardon, should it not meet with your approbation. As the

¹ A Lieut. John W. Taylor Dixon had distinguished himself with the Naval Brigade at the capture of Martinique. In 1799 he was commanding the *Princess Royal* (98) in the Mediterranean, but his identity with the would-be assassin is doubtful. In 1801 he had the *Ramilies* (74) at Copenhagen and in 1804, while in command of a 32-gun frigate with a convoy, was wrecked and drowned on the coast of Portugal.

president of the mutineers on board the Sandwich seems to guide the others, the destruction of whom might tend to restore the remainder to obedience, I therefore volunteer to perform such a glorious undertaking as the ridding the country of so great a traitor as the delegate Parker. And I will pledge myself to my country, and your lordship, to execute my plan upon so detested a character at the head of his illegal council. I trust to your lordship to contrive means to get me admission into the ship, should you approve. I have so completely made my mind up to the result of such an event that your lordship may be assured I shall be happy in performing that which appears to me of such public advantage.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your lordship's very obedient

humble servant,

J. W. DIXON.

[*Endorsement*: Private. Answered 10th June.

'Say that I give him great credit for his very spirited offer, but that I trust that it will not be necessary to have recourse to so very desperate a measure on this occasion.']

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

10th June, 1797.

My Lord,—I am honoured with your lordship's obliging letters of the 1st and 5th acknowledging the receipt of all my letters. I am quite distressed at the sad doings at the Nore, but hope the vigilant measures now taken will put a stop to it, and the good men brought to see their own interest in putting an end to the delusion so long carried on amongst the bad people; for am satisfied the greater part abhors what has been going on;

but, as Admiral Young writes me, they seem to think it a duty incumbent on them to follow each other, and I fear it will be long before we get into a proper way of thinking. I am sorry to say I find we are far from being fitted in those ships that have joined me, as you will see by Sir Roger Curtis's letter to the Admiralty.¹ In short I find in the very quietest ships they cavil and [are] ready to find fault with every trifle and a desire to fly to the shocking resource others have. How all this will end know not, but I fear not till every ship's company is dispersed. Even in this ship I have my difficulty to keep things right. Some under-handed villains are always, I find, at work. However I believe they are very few, and the good men seem to keep a good look-out on them.

I now come on a more pleasing subject. When the wind came to the N.W. I weighed and stood out with my little squadron. Yesterday morning the wind came to the eastward, and I was making sail to resume my former place when the signal was made for six sail-of-the-line in the S.W., which seemed to give universal joy. We joined them by noon, and as the wind was then N.E. stood in with my whole squadron, my mind quite at ease, and only wishing the Dutch to take the advantage of the wind, presuming on the few ships they had seen with me; but we found them all quiet last night, and are so this morning. The wind is now at N., which they cannot set sail with, particularly if they are bound northward. With the wind even at N.E. and transports with them, they can make little hand of it, unless bound right across. I have now indeed a very fine

¹ Curtis had joined the previous day, as related in the later part of the letter.

squadron, and happy the Glatton¹ makes one of them. Captain Trollope has great merit in bringing them back to their duty.

I have the honour to be, with much respect,
my Lord,

Your lordship's obedient and
obliged humble servant,
ADAM DUNCAN.

Venerable. The fleet in the Texel.

SPENCER TO DUNCAN

14th June, 1797.

Dear Sir,—I take this opportunity of acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 12th in order to have the pleasure at the same time of announcing the approaching termination of the mutiny at the Nore in as desirable a manner as could under all the circumstances be wished. In the course of the last forty-eight hours most of the ships have one after another dropped off and submitted themselves at discretion; and last night at length the Sandwich herself unmoored, got under way, and ran into the harbour with Parker and his associates on board, who have all been taken into custody and are now safely lodged in different prisons. We shall lose no time in

¹ The Glatton was an experiment, a purchased East Indiaman rated as a 50-gun ship but re-armed at the suggestion of Capt. Henry Trollope with twenty-eight 68-pounder carronades on the lower deck, which gave her fifty-six guns in all. Thus armed he joined the North Sea fleet, and in July single-handed attacked and drove into port a French cruiser squadron of four frigates, three corvettes and a cutter. For this service he was knighted. His ship with the Agamemnon was the last to desert Duncan, but Trollope succeeded in persuading his crew to go to Portsmouth instead of the Nore, and was then able to bring her back with Curtis. See *post*, pp. 181 and 199.

taking the necessary steps for bringing him and the other delegates to justice ; and I hope some examples will be made in every ship concerned, by which means alone we can flatter ourselves to restore anything like order or discipline again.

I wish the Dutch would give you an opportunity of beating them without the assistance of these scoundrels, but I fear there are no hopes of their moving. In a few days we shall, I hope, be able to send you out some ships and frigates, but there must be some purging and purifying first.

Believe me, dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

SPENCER.

At the Trinity House dinner on Monday last, your health was drunk with universal applause. Your firmness on this occasion has indeed most deservedly secured you the approbation of your country. I have also to acknowledge your letter of the 10th. I hope the news I send to-day from the Nore will tend to put a stop to all further quibblings everywhere else. We hear from Admiral Pole that great indignation has been excited in Lord Bridport's fleet by the accounts they have received of the length to which the fleet at the Nore have gone.¹

THE KING TO SPENCER

Queen's House, 14th June, 1797.
55 minutes past 6 P.M.

The account I have received from Earl Spencer of the arrival of the Sandwich and Monmouth in the harbour of Sheerness, and that troops have been placed in each of them, and Richard

¹ Rear-Admiral C. M. Pole was Lord Bridport's first captain.

Parker and several others carefully lodged in different places of confinement, gives me great satisfaction. I trust no means will be omitted of getting, if possible, at the instigators on shore of this outrageous mutiny.

I transmit to Earl Spencer a memorial delivered to me this day from a very observing attendant in my household.¹ If his request can be granted without opening a door to unreasonable demands, I shall for his assiduity be glad.

GEORGE, R.

THOMAS PEARCE TO SPENCER

My Lord,—It is with infinite pleasure that I have the honour of acquainting your lordship that the *Standard* has detached herself from the mutinous fleet at the Nore, and that she came to an anchor this day at one o'clock opposite to Block House Fort, followed by the *Agamemnon*, *Nassau*, *Vestal* and *Iris*. The *Montague*, *Lion* and *Director* may be expected this night, either in the *Thames* or *Medway*. This fortunate turn in the present unhappy state of things must, I am convinced, have been communicated to your lordship long before this could reach you; but, my Lord, I wish to arrest your attention for one moment on a subject from which some good to the country may be expected to result. Eighteen of the most desperate and disorderly of the *Leopard's* crew have been for these three days, by Colonel Nesbitt's particular wish, committed to my charge, during which time not a person except myself has been permitted to hold converse with them. '*Corresponding Societies*' and having been '*deluded*,'

¹ This memorial has not been found.

I have once or twice heard drop from them ; and in consequence this evening on locking them up I took the opportunity to speak to one of them, who I separated from the rest, of the name of Habbagin. This man was a quartermaster on board the Leopard, and from every account I have received was one of the most active among the mutineers. He was appointed by the crew, one of what they style committee-men. I hinted to this man that provided he would communicate to me the name of any person belonging to any society who either by letters, pamphlets, money or other means has kept alive the present spirit of mutiny at the Nore, that I would represent the good he had done his country by discovering such lurking traitors in a favourable manner, and if I meet with your lordship's countenance I will pursue the enquiry.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,
 Your lordship's most obedient and
 most humble servant,
 THOMAS PEARCE.

Gravesend, 13th June, 1797.

[*Endorsed* : ' 14th June, Admiralty, Desiring him to pursue the enquiry. ']

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

17th June, 1797.

My Lord,—I am honoured with both your lordship's obliging letters of the 11th and 14th. The last gave me the pleasing accounts of the mutiny at the Nore being near an end, and in the way much to be wished. Unless examples are made we never can go on. Many things should now be thought of, as fixing the internal regulations

of ships on one plan. Of late years every captain has taken upon him to establish rules for himself, so that no two ships have been governed in the same way, and [this] has given much occasion for grumbling. After a set of regulations once fixed, a captain should not be allowed to deviate from them on any account whatever ; but more of this afterwards.

The Triumph has joined, so I have now a most formidable fleet.¹ We are in sight of the Dutch fleet every day, but cannot think they will be such fools as [to] move. For some days none of their fish-boats came out, but now there are as many as ever ; what was the reason have never been able to learn. I have sent a letter with intelligence from Captain Berkeley,² though I give little credit to it, as some boats I have spoke myself and by report from others they give quite different accounts. Some say there was troops ready to embark at the Texel and were returned to Amsterdam ; others that there never were any troops there ; in short, I believe the Dutch fishermen very sensibly mind only their business ; am not sure but it would be as well more people did so. I take notice of what you say of some of the ships ; am in hopes all will be quiet now, but neither the Sans-Pareil nor the Russell have been perfectly correct. I beg this may be only to yourself. On making it known to this ship's company all was settled, I said a few words to them, which they answered with general applause, ten thousands thanks to me, and ended with many blessings and wishes for long life ; in short was quite overcome with their gratitude.

¹ The Triumph (74) was one of Curtis's squadron.

² Capt. Hon. G. C. Berkeley of the Formidable (98), also of Curtis's squadron.

I have the honour to be, with truth and respect, my Lord,

Your lordship's obedient and
obliged humble servant,

ADAM DUNCAN.

Venerable at sea.

The Dutch fleet in and out.

THE KING TO SPENCER

Windsor, 26th June, 1797.
2 minutes past 8 A.M.

Agreeable to the sentences of the court martial on the six seamen tried for mutinous conspiracy on board of the *Pompée* and the recommendation of two of the unhappy men to mercy, I approve of the execution of two and that mercy be extended to the two others ; as to the two remaining men, the one sentenced to a year's solitary imprisonment in the Marshalsea and the other acquitted, I take it no notice from me is necessary.¹

GEORGE, R.

THE KING TO SPENCER

Kew. 27th June, 1797.
13 minutes past 4 P.M.

The offence of which Richard Parker has been convicted is of so heinous and dangerous a nature that I can scarcely suppose there can be any legal objection, after confirming the sentence for his being hanged, to order his body to be hung in

¹ The *Pompée* (Capt. Vashon) was supposed to be particularly infected with revolutionary doctrine. From her the second mutiny at Spithead was instigated after all had been settled. On the 16th of June, after the fleet had returned to duty, a conspiracy was discovered on board to revolt a third time and carry her into Brest. Gill, pp. 58, 84, 94, 117.

chains on the most conspicuous land in sight of the ships at the Nore. Earl Spencer has therefore very properly directed the legality of hanging the body in chains to be enquired into, and if it can be done is to order it to be effected.

GEORGE, R.

*DECLARATION OF RICHARD PARKER*¹

I, Richard Parker, was born at Exeter, in Devonshire, on the 16th of April, 1767; was christened in the parish church of St. Mary Major by the Rev. Mr. Blackall. My father carried on a large and extensive business in the city of Exeter as a baker, until the year 1787, when he retired on his fortune to an estate he possessed in the parish of St. Sidwell's,² where he now lives. He declined his business in favour of my brother, John Parker, who at this time carries it on in the same house my father did, he renting it from my father. The house is situated in St. Peter's Church Yard, Exeter. I was always brought up in the fear of God, and received, through the goodness of my father at the earliest period of my life, such education as my age would admit of. When about eight years of age, I was placed under the tuition of the Rev. Mr. Marshall, grammarian at Exeter; under whose tuition I remained something more than four years, when a strong inclination possessed me to go to sea; which inclination was some time disapproved of by my father and family. At length they consented; and, after learning navigation from Mr. Osborne (then the keymaster at

¹ Docketed 'Parker, Admiral of Mutineers. Executed 30 June 1797.'

² A parish in Exeter.

Topsham, in Devonshire) I was received as a midshipman on board of his Majesty's ship Mediator ; of which ship a first cousin of mine, namely, Lieutenant Samuel Arthur, was second lieutenant.

On the 12th of April, 1782, I joined his Majesty's ship Mediator, commanded by the Honourable James Luttrell, as midshipman, and continued belonging to her until she was paid off on the 16th of April, 1783.¹ I then joined his Majesty's ship Ganges, as midshipman, Captain Luttrell being appointed to the command of her. I followed him and remained in her until the 4th of September following, when I was discharged by order of Admiral Montague into H.M. sloop Bull-Dog by application. Captain Edward Marsh commanded her. I proceeded in her to the coast of Africa, where we took possession of the River Gambia, ceded to England by France in the treaty concluding the American War. We arrived at Portsmouth, I think in June, 1784, and were shortly afterwards ordered to the West Indies. Previous to the orders arriving I was taken ill and sent to Haslar Hospital for the reception of petty officers and seamen near Gosport, and remained there until the day before the Bull-Dog sailed. The orders were to touch at Plymouth to take Captain Hunter on board to take his passage in her to the West Indies ; he being there to take the command of the Swan sloop-of-war. On the passage round to Plymouth I grew worse, and was sent to the hospital at Plymouth, I think on the

¹ Capt. James Luttrell took post in 1781, and in 1782 was commanding the Mediator (44) in Commodore Elliot's cruiser squadron in the mouth of the Channel and on the coast of Ireland for trade protection. An untrustworthy contemporary pamphlet entitled *An Impartial and Authentic Account, &c.* asserts that he quarrelled with his captain and sent him a challenge. Gill, p. 125.

23rd of July, 1784 ; and after a partial [recovery] was returned to H.M. ship *Blenheim*, from whence I obtained leave to visit my friends at Exeter to establish my health ; after which, finding the *Bull-Dog* was in the West Indies, and having a desire to improve myself by getting a knowledge of the merchant service, I applied, and through the interest of Lieutenant Watkins (one of the lieutenants of the *Blenheim*) obtained my discharge.

I then went out second mate of a ship called the *Arno* of Exeter, belonging to Messrs. Baring¹ and Mandroit, merchants at Exeter, my father giving ten guineas to the master of her, besides finding my own cabin expenses ; which was done as an encouragement to the master of her to pay every attention to my improvement. We sailed in December, 1784, for Genoa and Leghorn. We loaded home a general ship from Leghorn to London, where I quitted her and repaired to my friends at Exeter. After which I went a voyage in the *Queen of Naples* of Exeter, belonging to a Mr. Kennaway, merchant of Exeter, and proceeded in her to Naples ; from thence to the Gulf of Venice, where we loaded corn for Cadiz, in Spain. From thence we were chartered to load with wine and fruit at Malaga for London. We arrived in 1787. Since which I have been sometimes in the navy and sometimes in the India Service until the year 1793.

At the commencement of this present war I induced upwards of one hundred men to come forward in the sea service at a great expense to myself, when I was not in Government pay ; which can be attested to by Mr. Alderman Walker, of Exeter, who is brother-in-law to my Lord Hood.²

¹ John Baring, father of the first Baring Brothers.

² Lady Hood was a sister of Admiral Linzee.

Soon after procuring the men before mentioned (which was done with a view of their joining me in the *Hebe*, Captain Alexander Hood, who expected the *Hebe* would be ready to receive them with myself, who was to join her as master's mate on promotion), I was informed by Mr. Alderman Walker, of Exeter, that the *Hebe* would be obliged to receive a slight repair, which was quite unexpected ; and in consequence she would not be so soon ready to receive me as was expected. In the meantime the men, who with a deal of trouble and expense I had procured, were sent to Plymouth and drafted into different ships. Soon after which my company was requested at Mr. Walker's, where I was introduced to Captain Richard Lucas, who was appointed to the command of the *Sphynx*, twenty-gun ship, which was to fit out at Woolwich.¹ Captain Lucas desired I would join him as master's mate, saying that I could do the duty of lieutenant ; and he doubted not but there would soon be an opportunity of my being made a lieutenant, as he was informed that Sir Alexander Hood (now Lord Bridport) would have an eye on my promotion. I told him I was doubtful whether Captain Hood might not take it as an ill return for his proffered kindness for me to accept of his offer, and appealed to Mrs. Walker, who said she would by no means advise ; as if one ship should be more fortunate than another, and I was to choose the least fortunate from her recommendation, she should reflect on herself. After some further conversation with Captain Lucas, and his pointing out to me that it was impossible that Captain Hood could be affronted, as the complaint rather lay of my side, I agreed to join the *Sphynx* ; which

¹ Capt. Richard Lucas who took post in 1781 was commanding the *Arrogant* (74) in 1794. The MS. has ' *Spynx* ' throughout.

I did at Woolwich ; and was desired by Captain Lucas, as I had intended by my exertions at Exeter to serve Captain Hood essentially, though frustrated in doing it, he would give me an order with a letter to Lieutenant Rolles, who was at a rendezvous near Tower Hill, begging him that if men came under his inspection at the regulating hour I should be admitted to judge of such men as I deemed would be of service to the *Sphynx* ; at the same time requesting that such men as I approved of might be forwarded to the *Sphynx*. The request was complied with, and some valuable men sent to the *Sphynx*. In the meantime a slight misfortune fell on me, which prevented my joining the *Sphynx* previous to her sailing. After extricating myself from the misfortune alluded to before the *Sphynx* sailed, and confident I could be of service to my country, I applied to be received on board H.M. ship *Assurance*, commanded by Velteres Cornwall Berkeley, Esquire, as supernumerary ;¹ who did receive me, as I understood, to do the duty of an officer until the arrival of the *Sphynx*, after her having fitted out at Chatham under the inspection of Lieutenant Johnson, who was then taken ill and sent to sick quarters. A Lieutenant Richards, who had for some time been appointed, but never joined until she was fitted out, became then the first lieutenant. Soon after which, seeing every preparation for the *Assurance* sailing, I requested Richards to inform Captain B. that I would be glad to be sent on board the *Sandwich* to remain there until the arrival of the *Sphynx* ; which he informed me, Captain Berkeley would not comply with, on the account that as I had been of great service in

¹ The *Assurance* (44) was under orders to join Jervis's fleet in the West Indies.

fitting out the Assurance he would retain me; that he had mustered me not as a supernumerary, but as a person belonging to the ship, that his (Captain B.'s) interest was sufficient to provide for me. My answer was: However extensive the interest of Captain Berkeley might be, I thought it would be an ill compliment to the interest I was under to lay them, when they had so much in their power, under an obligation for my preferment to a person of whom probably they had not the slightest knowledge. Richards told me I was obstinate; and if I could not be a master's mate, he would make me do what duty he pleased, rated a midshipman.

As it was from the Assurance I was tried by the court martial, so much talked of against me, it is necessary I should state what I was tried for. Four months previous to its taking place, because I could not feel myself comfortable at being kept contrary to my interest in the Assurance, Lieutenant Richards told me if he could find an opportunity he would try me by a court martial. My answer was, 'Mr. Richards, I hope I know every part of my duty too well to subject myself to your intentions.'

About the time the Sphynx arrived, my communication with her was cut off; and soon after the sailing orders arrived for the Assurance to go to the Orkneys to convoy home the North-West men. Notwithstanding sending a remonstrance to Admiral Dalrymple (whose flag then flew at the Nore), I was compelled to proceed in the Assurance and leave my own ship and interest behind. I do not mean to cast any imputation on Admiral Dalrymple, as from the prying look-out kept on my actions the letter might never have reached him, as there were possibilities of its

being intercepted by order of the person Richards alluded to.

After our return to the Nore, Richards gave me an order to see all the gentlemen's cots and hammocks up, and likewise to report to him when the quarter-master's tier was clear—the windsail likewise to be got down. I duly attended to his order. In addition to those and other parts of the day duty, I was ordered to keep watch. Some time in November, having the middle watch (namely, from twelve at night until four in the morning), I observed in the order book that I was to be called again at six o'clock to see the lower gun-deck washed. It surprised me, being a very unusual thing to wash the lower gun-deck before the people had taken their breakfast. I was called according to order and attended; and, about seven bells (namely, half after seven o'clock), I reported to Richards that the deck was washed; who, as usual, inspected and approved of it. I then went into the cockpit or orlop¹ deck. Mr. Richards from design followed me immediately. On my coming down, I said, 'Gentlemen, your cots and hammocks are not up.' Richards being close to me observed, 'The cots and hammocks are not up.' I answered, 'Sir, you must have heard me just observe it.' He (Richards) immediately went to mine, and said, 'Whose is this?' (He knew well from his frequent visits before.) I answered, 'It is mine, Sir.' He said, 'My God, Sir, you that ought to shew an example to all the gentlemen in the ship to have your's down.' I answered, 'Mr. Richards, you may recollect I had the middle watch, and it is yet a very early hour for cleaning the orlop deck.' He made a very unpleasant answer which occasioned me for the first time to

¹ MS. 'harlop.'

be off my guard with him ; which was, speaking to a man who stood by, saying, ' Take mine ^{up} and do the same every day (if you like).' Richards immediately said, ' That is like contempt.' I answered, ' Sir, the man is not my servant ; as such if he does not like to take it up, I will take care to find some person to obey your order.' He replied, ' Take it up yourself.' I answered, ' I am an officer in this ship.' Richards, ' Take it up directly, Sir.' Answer, ' I am an officer in this ship, Sir, and will not disgrace myself.' R. ' By God, Sir, you shall take it up.' A. ' I will be damned if I do.' Those different expressions he construed into contempt and disobedience ; for which I was tried on board H.M. ship Royal William ; and not being able to disprove the words, I was found guilty. But by the sentence it proved that the Court looked on my prosecution as very frivolous.

Sentence : It was, that I was broke from being an officer on board H.M. ship Assurance—and to serve in such ship as Sir Peter Parker, Bart., commanding his Majesty's ships and vessels at Spithead and Portsmouth Harbour, should appoint. Admiral Gayton, President, whose humanity on that occasion was very great, ordered me a comfortable cabin, and treated me more like an injured person than a person found guilty. At the same time it may not be improper to mention that the lieutenants of the Royal William, after hearing the trial, were much exasperated against him, Richards, lieutenant of the Assurance, insomuch that when it was proposed to Lieutenant Evans (then first lieutenant of the Royal William, but now a captain in the service) to ask Richards to drink a glass of wine, he replied he would never set his legs under the table with a man of Richards'

description. I (after remaining on board the Royal William some fourteen days) at my request went on board H.M. ship Hebe, where I did the duty of master's mate;¹ and as soon as I possibly could, being rather disgusted with the treatment I had received, I retired from the service.

On the 26th November, 1794, I received my discharge from Sir Peter Parker and went home to Exeter to my father, who lives upon his fortune, having retired from the business of a baker in that city about ten years since. I married to Ann McHardy, daughter of George McHardy, of the parish of Blemar [*sic*], in Aberdeenshire. I lived there about nine weeks. We remained in Exeter in consequence of having been first married in Scotland. On the 15th April, 1795, myself and wife left Exeter for Blemar to see my wife's relations, remained there about four weeks—returned to Exeter, and there remained. I stayed in Exeter only eight days and returning to Blemar again I stayed there till October, when I went again to my father's, with whom I stayed till the May following. My wife was then delivered, and after that we went again to Scotland. My wife's brother paid a visit to my father with me to see the state of my connections, and agreed to settle an allowance upon me for the support of my family. In December last I drew upon my brother-in-law for £23 in favour of John Duff, of Edinburgh; which not being paid, I was arrested and put into gaol at Edinburgh, where I remained about three weeks, when I sent to the regulating officer, and

¹ In June 1794 the Hebe (38) was commanded by Capt. Alexander Hood. At the end of July she was under Capt. Paul Minchin. Sir Peter Parker in a letter to Nepean (17th June) said the captain of the Hebe had asked for Parker. Gill, p. 126.

agreed to enter into the navy for twenty guineas, with part of which I compounded with my creditor, and was put on board the Leith tender commanded by Lieutenant Watson ; by whom I was delivered to Captain Mosse of the Sandwich on or about the 1st of May, 1797. I never belonged (I solemnly declare) to any society whatever during my stay in Scotland ; nor was my acquaintance at all extensive, being confined to a few friends, the Rev. Mr. Grant of Dundee (son of Sir Archibald Grant of Monymusk), Lieutenant Wade and family, and Mr. Titterton. I was placed on board the Sandwich as a supernumerary, and not appointed to do any particular duty on board, but worked with the rest of the people. On the 12th of May I think it was that I was at work in the carpenter's mate's berth (Simms) on the middle gun-deck. I heard three cheers ; being surprised at that, I ran on deck, and was surprised to see two of the fore-castle guns pointed aft to the quarter-deck. Lieutenant Justice came on to the starboard gangway and said, ' My lads, what is it you want ? ' The answer was, ' A redress of grievances.' I immediately went below. In the course of that day I heard that Lieutenant Justice and some of the other lieutenants were ordered out of the ship. The following day, I thought the conduct of the ship's company was too violent, as they talked of hanging people and doing things which appeared to me to be against the interest of the country. I consulted with Simms, the carpenter's mate, who agreed with me in opinion that the proceedings were too violent, and that it appeared to be necessary for a person of a cool temper to have the regulating the business ; and Simms observed that he thought it a pity, as the business had taken place, that I was not amongst

them to endeavour to keep down the spirit that seemed to be rising in the fleet. The next day a select number of the ship's company, Gregory, Patman, Hughes, Hockless, Davies,¹ with several others whose names I do not recollect, received me into their society in the starboard bay, which was hung round with hammocks. In the course of that or the next day it was proposed that I should take the chair ; which I did, with a view of serving my country ; knowing the temper of seamen to be such that when raised they know not where to stop ; and at the hazard of my life I have frequently stopped that sort of spirit. I solemnly declare, and would swear were I at this moment about to appear before my God, that during the course of the mutiny nor at any time before, I ever received, or anybody directly or indirectly for me, any money or letters or messages from any person whatever not belonging to the fleet, except a trifling collection of money from the different ships of the fleet for the purposes of defraying the expenses of the delegates ; but even that never came through my hands. There were also great numbers of letters received from the different ships on the subject of the delegates' proceedings, which are now, I believe, on board the Sandwich, where I left them in the hands of Barnes, secretary to the delegates. I never knew anything respecting this business but what I communicated to the delegates for the purpose of being circulated through the fleet. But with respect to holding any private conversation with any person whatsoever, so help me God, I never did. The only time any person who was not a delegate was admitted among us was the day we

¹ In a memorandum in Lord Spencer's hand the names of the Sandwich's delegates are given as Parker, Davies, Hughes, Patterson, and Moore.

first went to Admiral Buckner ; when it being thought necessary that a few only of the delegates (instead of the whole number) should wait upon the Admiral, and that it should be proper beforehand to consider well what was to be said to him, I, Davies, Patman, and some others, in all about seven, went to the Tons, ordered a private room, and gave directions for the door to be shut upon us. Just as we had finished, Mr. Hudson, one of the master's mates of the Sandwich, came in, drank a glass of wine, but had no conversation whatever with any of us respecting our business. So help me God, I never did receive from any person whatever in any of the three kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland, any letter, message or advice, except a letter from my wife, now in the hands (as I believe) of Commissioner Hartwell, and the letters received from the ships in the fleet.¹

It has been reported and believed that wicked and designing people have been endeavouring to stimulate the fleet to a continuance of the mutiny. But I solemnly declare that I would discover such persons if I knew of any ; and as I shall answer to God, I do not believe that it ever entered into the hearts of any of the fleet to allow of such an interference. And as I hope for mercy, I knew of no such interference ; nor do I know of any man in the fleet who can be fairly suspected of having such knowledge. The cause originated with the seamen ; was carried on by the seamen ; and, as far as I know anything of it, they meant to confine themselves in their demands to what related to themselves only. I look upon myself now as speaking before my God ; and under that impression I declare, if anything more than a

¹ Capt. Francis J. Hartwell, R.N., was Commissioner at Chatham.

redress of grievances, or what was understood to be grievances of the fleet, was intended, I knew nothing of it.

After the fresh beef had been stopped, the delegates of the fleet, thinking it very hard to be deprived of their fresh provisions, thought it necessary, in order to have the fresh beef restored to them, to shew the country they had it in their power to stop the trade of the river ; but had no intention of injuring their country. A variety of papers may appear seemingly of a political nature and other strange natures not at all connected with what were understood to be the proper claims of the seamen, for which I can only account, that from the confused state the ships were in, it occasioned a number of things to be done, and papers sent away that were never communicated to the delegates, and of which I know nothing. What was transacted by me officially, I always set my name to. The paper mentioned stating a variety of conditions upon which the fleet would submit, I supposed to be dated on Friday or Saturday (containing, amongst others, a demand for the dismissing his Majesty's present Ministers) I am quite ignorant of ; unless it was one of those papers which came from the *Inflexible*, and which in the confusion that then prevailed might have been included in the proper dispatches I directed Gregory to make up ; but certainly formed no part of the conditions discussed and adopted by the delegates, and intended by them to be preferred to Government. That I am perfectly satisfied there could not be any extraneous money from the mode in which it was collected in small sums from ship to ship ; I recollect two pounds from one, and seventeen shillings from another. That the hanging up of an effigy did not originate in the

assembly of the delegates, but originating in one ship, it was a matter of sport pursued through the whole fleet. I never belonged to any club or society in my life. I do solemnly declare that until the moment of the commencement of the mutiny, and my being invited to become a member and mediator amongst them, I never had any intercourse or connection with any person who had the knowledge of such mutiny being intended, and that I entered into it with reluctance. Gregory was the person who proposed me, and that I continued only in it with a view of suppressing that spirit before mentioned ; and that I became president, I think, on the 16th of May last, being the fourth day of the mutiny.

When any proclamations were received on board, the publication of them to the ship's company was made, and all hands were turned out and the papers read to them, and they were stuck up in a sufficient part of the ship for the general perusal ; and so far as related to the Sandwich, every proclamation and other proposition from Government was read and stuck up as before mentioned ; and that it was the intention of the delegates to have the same pursued in every other ship.

THE KING TO SPENCER

Windsor. 6th January, 1798.
44 minutes past 8 A.M.

I am sorry to find the spirit of mutiny in the fleet has extended to every quarter of the globe, which certainly renders the putting the sentences of court martial into execution. I therefore empower Earl Spencer to direct that the two

mutineers of the Tromp may suffer death agreeable to the minutes of the court martial, which I return.

GEORGE, R.

THE KING TO SPENCER

Windsor. 11th June, 1798.

40 minutes past 7 o'clock.

It cannot but be grievous to me that the spirit of mutiny from time to time breaks out in different ships; and I entirely coincide in opinion with Earl Spencer that any relaxation of punishment would be highly detrimental to the discipline of the navy. I therefore confirm the sentence of the court martial on the two men of the Haughty gun-vessel, that they shall both be hanged.

GEORGE, R.

PART III

NORTH SEA PAPERS

ADMIRAL DUNCAN AND THE BATTLE OF CAMPERDOWN

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

At the time the following correspondence begins Duncan had held the North Sea command for two years, having hoisted his flag in February, 1795. Up to that time, when he was already sixty-four, he had been unemployed since 1783, when Keppel left office. Thomas Keppel in his *Life of Lord Keppel* (i. 144, n.) records a story, on the authority of Duncan's daughter, Lady Jane Hamilton, that Lord Spencer, after assuming office in November, 1794, was going over the flag list with Dundas, when he said, 'What can be the reason that Keppel's Duncan has never been brought forward?' Dundas replied that he thought Duncan would like to serve, adding that he had married his niece; and that night the neglected Admiral was appointed.

Duncan's feeling for Lord Spencer is evidenced in a very regular and voluminous private correspondence which covers the whole period of what is usually called his blockade. But as the letters shew, there was no declaration of blockade till he asked for it in 1797. His duty was to watch the Texel and protect trade, and every detail of his proceedings is given in his weekly letters, from which the following documents are selected.

That his conduct of the command—especially during the mutiny period—was highly appreciated can now be seen in the fact that it was intended to give him a peerage before the battle of Camperdown had been fought. The modest, and even apologetic, letter which he wrote to Lord Spencer immediately after the action is of special interest. Little or nothing has hitherto been known of what he thought of his exploit, for, according to family tradition,

for which the Editor is indebted to the present Editor of the *Camperdown*, he could rarely be brought to speak. But the letters set at rest finally the fact that his manner of engaging was in effect an attack in general on the enemy dictated solely by his keenness to get at the enemy, and that they could seek safety on their own coast, and that this was not the expression of any subtle tactical idea, but that which inspired the similar attack designed by Nelson in his Trafalgar memorandum.

A curious feature of his letters, which is apt to be the sense obscure in places, is possibly a reflection of the entire absence of egotism which was a conspicuous feature of the finest and handsomest man in the service. This is that in writing he had a habit—wherever possible of omitting the pronoun 'I.' These omissions have been supplied in the text, as it seemed undesirable to tamper with so characteristic an idiosyncrasy.

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

13th March, 1797.

My Lord,—

I confess myself much at a loss what the Dutch could mean by their last short excursion; from their numbers think they may now try their strength; may it not be to draw this fleet from our own coast to form an invasion if that is ever intended? Your lordship will see in Mr. Richard Cadman Etches's¹ remarks on Invasion, p. 31, the middle of the page, 'Their plan is to draw off the attention of the North Sea fleet by putting to sea with that of the Dutch, at the same time to menace the kingdom at different points; but their grand object will be an attempt on the coast of Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk, &c.' The Baltic convoys from England, as they sail with a westerly wind, are not subject to an attack from the Dutch unless they cruise. The homeward-bound must be attended to by the fleet or a strong squadron. I have now a frigate and two sloops on the look-out, so shall hear if the Dutch have again moved. I am rather of opinion the late glorious victory gained by that able officer, Sir John Jervis, so creditable to him and the brave officers and men that served under him, may for a time damp the ardour of all our enemies; which I pray God may be the case. I fear Lord Bridport will be drove far to the westward with this gale; at present it is a little more moderate

¹ See vol. i. pp. 225-7.

but the wind still E. by N. I have sent to try to get this letter ashore ; having had no intercourse with the shore since the 9th, have got no public letters.

I have the honour to remain, with much respect,
my Lord,

Your lordship's obedient and
obliged humble servant,
ADAM DUNCAN.

Venerable.

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

30th June, 1797.

My Lord,—This morning was honoured with your lordship's letter of the 26th ; am glad to hear the mutiny business goes on so well, and hope the examples made will put a stop to this abominable disposition that has got amongst us ; am sorry to find the state of the *Beaulieu* prevents her from coming where she is so much wanted.¹ I will again repeat what I have before said with much regret, many of the ships in this fleet are by no means to be depended on. I never see a captain but I hear complaints of their crews' turbulent dispositions, and have had occasion to see it in one ship's company that came with Sir Roger Curtis, and who I had a good character of ; at present shall say not a word more, as I am determined, when a proper opportunity offers, to have a court martial. All this you may believe is most irritating to a commanding officer, and keeps me in so constant anxiety that I really

¹ The *Beaulieu* (40) had recently come home from a period of service in the West Indies under Jervis and Christian. She was present at Camperdown.

believe cannot long hold out. I have, thank God, been wonderfully supported so far, and shall use every exertion, but it must wear me out at last. The station is indeed as flat, as your lordship in one of your letters expresses it, as possible. We see Dutch ships going in and out every day, as if in profound peace, under neutral colours. The large store-ships that were seen to sail some time ago from the Texel to the Baltic, loaded there no doubt with all kind of naval stores for the Dutch and French, are daily passing us and examined, with a few deals above for a blind, and daresay will be made up for transports if wanted; also a great supply of seamen. Our ships tamely looking at all this requires more philosophy than most of us are masters of, and I dread in time may break out in violence. The intelligence I had yesterday from a ship just from Texel, that there was thirty sail of men-of-war, large and small (this I see every day), thirty transports and a great number of troops but none embarked, and that it would be a fortnight before they were ready. There is no dependence on what I get here. The wind has been almost constantly to the eastward. I am glad you have given Captain Trollope a 74-gun ship; he well deserves it; but shall not wish to put him immediately into the Russell, as it may make a little confusion, and Captain Trollope's only wish to get from the Glatton is the difference of pay, as he looks on her to be in force superior to a seventy-four.¹ I have not yet seen him, as it blows strong, but will try and manage it to give content. I suppose it is not intended to put Captain Dickson into the Glatton; the Admiralty don't say how he is to be disposed of. It is this day four months since I was on shore;

¹ See *ante*, p. 154, note.

the little time I had at Yarmouth was so taken up, that I may say I had not a comfortable moment.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,
Your lordship's obedient and
obliged humble servant,
ADAM DUNCAN.

Venerable.

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

17th July, 1797.

My Lord,—As your lordship is now in full possession from good authority of the enemy's force in the Texel, you will be able to judge how inadequate I am in numbers to attack their men-of-war and stop the transports. My force is certainly good, but in case of being disabled numbers may be very troublesome; and should they send off the transports with frigates, a landing may be made without interruption from my fleet—so far thought right to mention to you. I have now been near eight weeks from Yarmouth and honoured with many kind letters from your lordship, yet in all that time not a letter from the Admiralty to approve or disapprove of my conduct (from which have some reason to conclude the latter is the case) nor any instruction at what period my cruise is to end. There is yet a great deal of summer to come, and we cannot hold out to the end of it. Many of the ships that came from the westward had just come from long cruises, and had not time to get stores, of which they are deficient, and the scurvy is making its appearance. Water will soon grow scarce, and if we go on our ground tiers and [are] obliged to fill

salt water, it will be very tedious, particularly at Yarmouth, to recruit.

By the information I had both last night and to-day from the Texel, have every reason to think the Dutch fleet will sail with 30,000 troops in transports, and on Saturday were actually unmoored, but the wind failed. The French General was saluted, which we plainly heard.¹ I have for some days been at an anchor in sight of them, but not so near as could have wished from calms. This morning the wind sprung up at N.W. and stood off, but shall be in again if it comes to the eastward, and shall only further say, as far as my abilities carry me, shall do my best for his Majesty's service. The Agamemnon has just joined and find Captain Cubb is come out to the Glatton, which I am sorry for, as I assure you we are far from good order yet, and every day have complaints of want of respect to officers. How changes of captains at sea will go down cannot say, but dread not well. However, should I find any difficulty, must send Captain Cubb in again. It is not a time to make more ill blood amongst us, nor has it ever been said what is to be done with Captain Dickson of the Russell. We have had some very warm weather and calms.

I have the honour to remain, with respect and gratitude, my Lord,

Your lordship's most obedient
and very humble servant,
ADAM DUNCAN.

Venerable, at sea.

¹ On 21st June Truguet, the French Minister of Marine, informed General Hoche at Coblenz that the Directory had decided to take advantage of the mutiny trouble in England to make a descent on the north of Ireland. 'Consequently,' he wrote, 'it has been settled that the Texel squadron which has long been ready for sea is to sail as soon as possible with a landing force of

SPENCER TO DUNCAN

27th July, 1797.

Dear Sir,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 13th and 17th instant, and regret that the enemy, though apparently prepared for sea, have not yet made up their minds to try what they can do, and give you an opportunity of shewing what I know you will do with them whenever it happens. I assure you it is not owing to any want of approbation of your proceedings that nothing of that kind has appeared in any of the official letters from the Board of late, as we are all of us fully impressed with the activity, spirit and skill with which you have conducted your command through these very difficult times; but in the course of a dry official correspondence it is not usually the custom to introduce much of compliment, and we trusted that you could not entertain a doubt on the subject of our sentiments.

This approbation is not confined to the Board of Admiralty alone; and in order to convince you that it is not I am happy to be authorised by his Majesty to signify his intention of bestowing some public mark of his favour on you at this time. What it shall be in some manner will depend on your own wishes on the subject; and if I might venture to offer an opinion to you, I should recommend your choice of an Irish peerage. In case you should agree with me, I must trouble you

20,000 men under General Daendals. . . . The Dutch Government has undertaken to collect the necessary transport.' Desbrière, *Projets et tentatives*, i. 258. The squadron was under Admiral de Winter. Of the 20,000, 6000 were to be French, but the Dutch refused to receive either them or a French general. At the end of July the troops ready at the Texel numbered only a little over 13,000. *Ibid.*, p. 261.

to let me know by what title you would wish to be distinguished. If you should feel any objection to this, perhaps you might better like the Order of the Bath, to which, if you are desirous of an honour which may remain in your family, I have reason to suppose that his Majesty would be pleased to add a baronetage. I shall be glad of your answer as soon as convenient, and on this subject have only to add that it gives me great pleasure to be the channel of conveying to you the sense I know his Majesty entertains of your merit and services.

The letters and orders you will receive from the Board will make it necessary for you to part with some of the large ships now with you.¹ We should willingly have left them, if the pressing emergencies of the service westward, and the necessity we are under of reinforcing Lord St. Vincent, did not oblige us to the measure. However, when the Warrior has joined you, your squadron, even with the diminution of the Prince, Formidable, Sans-Pareil and Bedford, will be a very strong one, and undoubtedly quite equal to beat any force that can be opposed to you. We are in the meantime using all possible exertions to add some large frigates to those you have already, and in a few days I hope some will be able to join you. I have wondered a little, as you have now the adequate number of two-decked ships, that you have not applied to have a First Captain, which when fifteen sail-of-the-line compose a squadron, you are by the late regulations entitled to. I should think you might very easily find some upon the list of the young Rear-Admirals who in this capacity would be of great use to you; but of

¹ Curtis's squadron which had joined him at the crisis of the mutiny contained two 3-deckers (Prince, Formidable) and two 80-gun ships (Sans-Pareil and Cæsar).

this you are the best judge, and I only throw it out as a hint, which I trust you will consider quite as it is meant, and merely as a private communication from one friend to another.

We have sent you out wine, fresh meat and water, and will continue to supply you with those necessary refreshments on every opportunity, as it would be wrong to quit your station at present, while so excellent an effect is produced, not only here but all over Europe, by your remaining there. If you should think it of any advantage to declare the Texel in a state of blockade, and that your force when the frigates get out to you is adequate to watching the Vlie Passage as well as that near which you are anchored, there does not appear the least reason why you should not do so ; and if you did, you would then have a right to prevent any vessels whatever (whether neutral or otherwise) from going in or coming out. Lord St. Vincent has found great advantage from this at Cadiz, and I do not see why it should not answer as well with you.

It has been suggested that sinking a few of the large Dutch fly-boats (as they call them) in the principal passage would effectually prevent large ships from coming out. You are now so well acquainted with the Texel, that any idea of this sort must be entirely left to your judgment and discretion ; but any blow of this kind against them or any other fair way of distressing them would (especially at this juncture) have most excellent effects in every point of view,

Believe me, dear Sir, with great truth,

Your very faithful humble servant,

SPENCER.

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

7th August, 1797.

My Lord,—Since I last did myself the honour to write your lordship we have a little more intercourse with Admiral de Winter by a flag of truce, which you will see by my public letter. My own idea it was a frivolous excuse to see our force, and rather think they saw nothing very agreeable, as the Prince, Formidable and Sans-Pareil had not left us. On Monday evening I stood close in to the Texel, and must say every time I look in see more pennants. Whether it is the India ships we heard of they have got forward I know not ; there are about twenty-five in all. I don't say this thinking I am inferior in force to them, but they certainly appear to have more exertion than for these two years past. Your intelligence, I should think, will let you know what is going on. From all I have been able to learn their troops embarked near three weeks ago ; if so, from the warm weather we have had and in the Texel, where they are surrounded with sand, should think their situation almost intolerable. A report we had on Sunday when at an anchor that part of the troops had disembarked ; this I mentioned to Admiral Young, but have heard no more of it. We are made to understand the troops are all Dutch, which looks like a foreign expedition, and in spite of all we can do when bad weather comes may elude our utmost vigilance. If that is the object, should think it madness in the extreme to risk a battle ; the weather will do the business for them.¹

¹ He means, of course, ' madness for them (the Dutch) to risk a battle,' as the weather must sooner or later force him to raise the blockade.

Now, my Lord, as to myself, should this treaty with France not end in a peace, which to give you my opinion really think will not be the case, hope you will have no objection to my retiring.¹ My own concerns call loud for it ; indeed they must suffer much if I do not soon get to regulate them. Whoever comes to this command, as it must now be great, will not be able to go on without a larger ship, as the accommodations in a 74-gun ship are such that business must stand still, as the only place to see captains and officers is the quarter-deck, which in this climate is not the most agreeable. Another thing, the public has wisely thought an Admiral with twenty sail-of-the-line (I don't know about its [being] fifteen) requires the assistance of First Captain.² I will fairly tell you, as to myself at present, have very little assistance ; the attention to a 74-gun ship requires more exertion than most people have, without assisting the Admiral. I find Captain Fairfax, though a very good man in every respect, got old and of a worn-out constitution.³ The Venerable cannot hold out a winter's cruise, I am sure, for [when] it rains even in my cabin am not dry, as is the case with everybody in the ship. Indeed when she has much motion she cracks as if she would go to pieces. Little has been done to her for near four years ; in all the time I have been in her I will venture to say she has cost the public less than any

¹ On 2nd July Lord Malmesbury had gone to Lille to renew the negotiations for peace which had failed at the end of 1796.

² Twenty was the number established by the Order in Council of 22nd March, 1747. It had lately been reduced to fifteen by an Order in Council of 8th November, 1795, 'provided such squadron shall be composed of H.M. own ships.'

³ Capt. William George Fairfax of the Venerable had held post rank for sixteen years.

ship in the service.¹ The friendship you have always honoured me with has led me to freely tell my situation.

I have the honour to remain,

Your lordship's obliged humble servant,

ADAM DUNCAN.

Venerable, at sea.

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

9th August, 1797.

My Lord,—I am much honoured by your lordship's letter of the 27th ultimo. The enemy still keep in. Although we are told they will come to sea, they have missed some opportunities. I am perfectly satisfied the Board must have much business on hand, and now fully convinced that only prevented my having letters from them before this time. I must at the same time acknowledge your punctuality on all occasions. It is certainly highly gratifying that my conduct has been considered by his Majesty as worthy of his gracious attention, and must say am much at a loss to determine. What you are pleased to point out, I fear, is more than I have a right to expect. In answer to a letter I had from Mr. Dundas, I have left him to determine for me, as he knows perfectly my sentiments and situation in life. Must therefore request you will add one more favour to me, by mentioning it to him to determine. As to a title, none I can think so proper as my own name, should the determination be that way. For my own part have no other ambition than to leave a remembrance of me to my family.

Before this you will have heard the Sans-

¹ The Venerable was built in 1784.

Pareil, Prince and Formidable have left us ; the Bedford's orders only came yesterday, and she shall be sent immediately. As to what you hint about a First Captain, you'll see by my last that I thought of it, but without a three-deck ship it is impossible to accommodate more officers than I have. This cruise being over, shall tell you fully my mind on that subject. Before this never had a permanent fleet, so had no right to ask a First Captain. I take your hint exceeding kind. Captain Hope, I understand, is so well as to be able to go to sea again ; I must own my partiality to him.¹

We have got the oxen, sheep, &c., and water ; they joined yesterday about mid-day, and will this day be all cleared. I hope the wind at Brest in the S.W. moderate. I expect we will be able to hold out as long as the weather is favourable. I have given a copy of the Admiralty order to stop neutral ships going into the Texel, and hope it will have a good effect. As to what has been suggested about stopping up the Texel, can now speak with certainty. It cannot be done. My master sounded the whole passage up near to the ships with two cutters, and he says the narrowest part is three quarters of a mile ; indeed the tide is so strong, that at any rate fear it would be impracticable.

I have the honour to remain, with respect,
my Lord,

Your lordship's obedient and

obliged humble servant,

ADAM DUNCAN.

Venerable, at sea.

¹ Probably Charles Hope, who had been a post-captain for twenty years. He was made commissioner at Chatham in 1801.

SPENCER TO DUNCAN

11th August, 1797.

Dear Sir,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 29th ultimo and 7th instant. The former does not require any answer, and you will find when mine of the 27th reaches you that I had anticipated in some measure a part of the latter; I mean that which relates to a First Captain. You have only to mention whom you wish for in that capacity and I do not think the Board would have any difficulty. Gambier, the other day, when talking of this subject, seemed to think that Admiral Patton would make a very good one;¹ but I do not mention it as by any means wishing to suggest anything, as it is much more desirable you should have a man of your own choice (provided he is high enough in the service to give him proper authority with the captains) in a situation which must be of all others the most confidential that can be conceived. With respect to a three-decker, you know how much we have talked and laughed on this subject. However if you really state that it would make your situation more comfortable, I think we may be able to spare you one from the Western fleet; and as the London has been fitted for a flag, I should propose, when we can send out the other large ships, which have lately left you, to Lord Bridport, to bring her round for this purpose, and I believe you will find her a fine ship.

I am anxious to receive your answer to my

¹ Rear-Admiral Philip Patton was a special friend of Sir Charles Middleton, hence probably the recommendation. For his high qualification as a staff officer, see *Barham Papers* (N.R.S.), vol. i. pp. 368 *et seq.*

last letter that I may know what I am to call
in my next.

Believe me, dear Sir,

Your very faithful humble servant,

SPENCER

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

2nd October, 1797. [Off Yarmouth.]

My Lord,—I am honoured with your lordship's letter of the 28th. Your lordship will be informed by my public letter of our arrival here ; and now we are in shall give my opinion freely, however liable it may be attended to ; but I shall have satisfaction of a mind quite unburdened from the consequences of keeping the fleet at sea this season. That a fleet kept together in readiness to go wherever it may be wanted must be more formidable to an enemy (particularly at this season) than at sea, subject to separation and disaster, and cannot go nearer the enemy's port than where we now are, may also be drove out of their station as not to be found when wanted. The ships shall be got ready as fast as possible to follow my present orders, and for my own part shall not go on shore whilst those orders subsist. As to my going on board the Formidable if she comes to me at Yarmouth, I can at an anchor do what was impossible at sea, get my domestics, &c. on board, with my master, who is the best North Sea pilot in this country ; and as I know the ship is well appointed, will make no change of officers at present, as it would certainly occasion much confusion. Shall likewise be content with whatever captain is in her, or if there is none can soon get one for the present. When I leave

the Venerable, hope I may be authorised to say the officers and ship's company are to be parted from me but a short time. Indeed I must be of opinion it is the least reward due for their late distinguished behaviour, and what is often granted to captains may be to me, a three-deck ship to put all on board of at once. Such a ship is now at Chatham, and as Captain Hope writes me he never was better in his life, he with the Venerable's ship's company, and a few others am sure we can get from Scotland, will soon have her ready for service, long before the season for acting comes on in the North Sea. As to a First Captain, that may stand till we are a little advanced in the ship he is to be in. I think it would be a pity to break in on such a ship's company as the Formidable's, who anybody that has not the reason I have for being attached to my own would be glad of. In the meantime I will take water and provisions into the Venerable, and, crazy as she is, go to sea in her, if the Formidable cannot be brought into port for a change. I hope I shall not be thought importunate in begging the rank of Commander for Lieutenant Cleland, my own First, who is an old and faithful servant, and a worthy deserving man.

At present we have every appearance of a westerly wind continuing as it is, and this weather may I daresay continue for part of this month. I hope to get in to-day, and have the honour to be, with much respect, my Lord,

Your lordship's obedient and
obliged humble servant,
ADAM DUNCAN.

Venerable, off Yarmouth.

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

9th October, 1797.

My Lord,—This morning a lugger at the back of the sands made the signal that the enemy's fleet were at sea. I immediately unmoored the fleet, and we are now almost out. I have sent copies of the different letters to the Admiralty. By the remarks the master of the *Speculator* made there was nothing like transports.¹ This manoeuvre does not surprise me, to make a show knowing our fleet was in, and hearing, which they must have done, how many of our ships were disabled. However the wind is now at N.E. and shall make a good course over to them, and if it please God hope to get to them. The *Agincourt* is the only ship that did not get under sail, but I see she has got her powder in, and dare say will follow immediately. By the wind changing to the west, Saturday and Sunday, we are almost all complete. I just see two ships joining, which suppose is the *Isis* and *Buckle* (?). I am ill off for frigates ; more should be immediately sent. The *Active* cutter has just joined. I think there is a great probability we shall get sight of the Dutch fleet to-morrow. I shall only add that I hope every exertion will be made to answer the expectation of the public, and have the honour to be, with respect, my Lord,

Your lordship's obedient and
obliged humble servant,

ADAM DUNCAN.

P.S.—All agree there are no transports.²

Venerable, without the buoys, Yarmouth. 2 o'clock P.M.
The wind N.N.E.

¹ *Speculator* was the lugger referred to above.

² A wild project of General Daendals for invading Ireland across Scotland had been suppressed by Hoche, and all idea of a landing in either country was in abeyance. Desbrière, i. 264-6.

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Walmer Castle. 12th October, 1797.

My dear Lord,—Your letter of this morning has put us in a state of anxious suspense. I am afraid the Dutch fleet will again get into the Texel. It would certainly be wrong till we hear more to put his name into the *Gazette*. But it appears to be perfectly impossible to put it into the *Gazette* at any rate so soon as next Saturday ; for the Duke of Portland writes to me this morning that the King had objected in the person of Sir John Shore to his taking his *own name* for his title.¹ This, for ought I yet know, applies equally to Admiral Duncan, for the only letter he ever wrote to me on the subject of the title certainly mentioned his own name ; but on the other [hand] his family rather wished it should be some title more characteristic of the occasion of giving it, and it was upon that subject among others I was desirous of seeing him. That, however, must for very satisfactory reasons be delayed for a little time.

I am, my dear Lord,

Yours truly,

HENRY DUNDAS.

Mr. Pitt says Admiral Duncan's motto ought to be ' *Clarum et Venerabile Nomen.*'

LORD GRENVILLE TO SPENCER

Wotton. 13th October, 1797.

My dear Lord,—We have just received the messenger with the news of Duncan's victory, with

¹ First Lord Teignmouth, who in 1793 succeeded Lord Cornwallis as Governor-General of India.

which you may suppose we are not a little elated, and I cannot refrain congratulating you upon it. The political consequences of this success, I think, if I am not too sanguine, are likely to be more important than those of any other we have obtained this war.

One of the great objects is the raising people's spirits, and I wish to suggest to you with this view whether it would not be right, as this is one of the very *few cases* in which we have taken the Commander-in-Chief's flag, that the flag should be paraded through the streets with a proper detachment of sailors, &c., and lodged in St. Paul's. You are too sensible of the effects of impressions of this nature to treat this idea lightly ; for if we had done in this war half that our enemies have done to raise the courage and zeal of their people, we should not now be where we are.

A natural wish that occurs on this occasion is that of striking either at the Nieudiep or at Flushing ; but here I am afraid we shall be met by the difficulty of *troops*.

I sincerely rejoice with you in what has been done, which seems, as far as I yet know it, to be one of the most complete things in its kind that our naval history can tell of.

Ever, my dear Lord,

Most faithfully and sincerely yours,

GRENVILLE.

(Private. Received 14th October, 1797.)

THOMAS GRENVILLE¹ TO SPENCER

Wotton. 13th October, [1797.]

Joy to you, my dear Lord Spencer. I have just heard the news of your victory, and I am

¹ See *ante*, vol. i. p. xiii.

told by my brother that I have scarce time to say to you how happy I feel that all the good which happens to us is under the flag of the Admiralty. Surely this is great news. Our family interest have made Duncan a Viscount and have pursued their victory by an attack upon the Texel. God bless you.

(Received 14th October, 1797.)

DUNCAN TO SPENCER

15th October, 1797.

My Lord,—For the particulars of our victory shall leave your lordship to my public letter, and shall just say I was obliged to lay all regularity and tactics aside, we was so near the land, or we should have done nothing ;¹ but had they been out in the sea not a ship would have escaped, though to do them justice nobody could have behaved better than they did, and sold their ships dear, so that all we heard about dissatisfaction, &c., was not true. They were also very well manned. The Admiral de Winter is now with me, and a most agreeable sensible man he is. He says he came to sea contrary to his opinion, and that had I not seen him, as I did, should have returned to port and kept us in a constant state of suspense till our ships had been disabled ; then in the spring hoped to bring a fleet to sea superior to ours. I find by all his conversation the Dogger Bank action, where they still think they beat our fleet with an inferior force, gave

¹ This passage must finally settle the question as to whether Duncan had any specially tactical idea in attacking in two columns—that is, in order of sailing.

them great hopes that the same thing would have again happened. He tells me 25,000 men, all Dutch troops, were long embarked for a descent in Ireland, but they never could get an opportunity to sail. After August was over, he would not undertake it north about, nor, he says, can any fleet, even men-of-war, think of a passage that way after this month, and that the Texel fleet must be in the New Deep early next month. I shall leave a cruiser on my rendezvous to pick up what ships may have been sent to me and look out till further orders are sent. I came to the Nore at once, that refitting may commence immediately. Our prizes are many of them dismasted, and the sooner they get to the Nore the better before too late in the year.¹ I could not send Captain Fairfax sooner, but hope it will be no loss to him. I assure your lordship to the diligence of Captain Trollope much is due, and De Winter says he could not have thought it possible any man would have been so daring. He never made a movement that was not immediately perceived by the Russell.² You will see what a number of men both fleets have lost ; they fired low ; in consequence the carnage was great. I had at one time no less than four ships on me, and a ship running across all on fire on the poop. We had a fire to keep up from all quarters. Our people were too eager at first, and threw away a great deal of fire ; latterly were more cool, and did execution with every gun. I and the pilot were the only [ones] that had not a scratch on the quarter-deck,³ and De Winter, who is as tall as

¹ Seven of the line, two ' fifties ' and one frigate were taken.

² The Russell led the larboard division.

³ The official report printed by Schomberg, iv. p. 562, shows the flagship returned only five officers wounded, but they included Mr. Brown, the pilot.

me, says not a man but himself was left alive on his quarter-deck. Admiral Onslow behaved with great spirit, and I do believe no fault is to be found. Our pumps were both destroyed, and from shot holes, could not keep the ship clear of water for a considerable time, till the pumps were repaired. We had also the land to encounter with, which was disagreeable, with so many crippled ships. We have three Admirals prisoners, an Admiral, Vice and Rear, the two last was in one ship.¹ The Vice was old and infirm, but as he was a great favourite of the seamen he was sent ; the other, Admiral Storij, took more care of himself than he did of his admiral, De Winter, whose second he was. I got alongside of him, but he did not seem fond of us ; not being much disabled in her sails he got from me, and I did not choose to quit the Admiral till he surrendered. I see De Winter is not pleased with Storij, but I say nothing. Still am at a loss what ships are taken, but feel perfectly satisfied all circumstances considered all was done that could be, and if we all get in we shall be in good luck, but the enemy held out longer by being near their shore and the approach of night. It was not in my power to dispatch Captain Fairfax sooner, which am sorry for ; and have now only to add that I have acted so as to have the continuance of your lordship's favour and protection, [and] shall ever esteem it my highest honour to remain, with respect,

Your lordship's obedient and

faithful humble servant,

ADAM DUNCAN.

Venerable, at the Nore.

¹ Vice-Admiral Reijntjes and Rear-Admiral Menses were taken in the Jupiter (74).

Guns, 1066	} British fleet	{ killed, 191
Men, 8315		
		{ wounded, 561
		more we don't know of. ¹
Guns, 1255	} Dutch fleet	{ We know but of
Men, 8644		
		{ two ships in these
		{ about 250 killed
		{ and 300 wounded.

P.S.—The large frigates that was placed between the line-of-battle ships, as we was going down particularly and indeed during the action, galled us most prodigiously, and as they could fire coolly and with precision did us much mischief. One of their brigs was sunk from a shot from the Monarch, I was told, for they also fired, though our frigates could do nothing. I was much pleased with Captain Paget's behaviour, who came from Yarmouth (my only small vessel and repeater) and continued to repeat. He is a new acquaintance, but is a great favourite. I think him a very fine young man and an active officer.²

SPENCER TO DUNCAN

16th October, 1797.

Dear Admiral,—You have done gloriously indeed, and I really have not words to express what I feel on the occasion. So great a victory at so critical a time, gained entirely by the unexampled

¹ The *Gazette* returns were 203 killed and 622 wounded, but the Report of the Relief Committee made it 228 killed and 812 wounded (16 mortally). James, ii. 81. Duncan first wrote 'English Fleet,' but carefully erased it with a knife and substituted 'British Fleet.'

² Capt. Hon. Charles Paget of the sloop Martin.

activity of your exertions, comes accompanied with so many circumstances which enhance its value to me as an Englishman, as a Minister, and as a warm friend of yours, that it is quite impossible for me to shape my congratulations to you in a manner satisfactory to you myself. I will therefore trust to your usual kindness that you will do me credit for thinking as I ought upon it. It is with sincere satisfaction, however, that I fulfil my duty by announcing to you that I have just received a note from the King in which he signifies his intention of immediately creating you a Viscount of Great Britain;¹ and as his Majesty has expressly desired that it may be announced in the *Gazette* to-morrow, Mr. Dundas and I have put our heads together, and have determined that your title shall be Viscount Duncan of Camperdown. By this your own name (much too good an one to lay aside) will be continued to posterity with a title annexed to it, marking the glorious occasion by which your honour has been so well earned. Vice-Admiral Onslow, of whom I am happy to see your very handsome testimony, will in the same *Gazette* be announced as a Baronet, and his Majesty has signified his intention of conferring the honour of knighthood on Captain Fairfax at the levee on Wednesday, when I shall present him. When I have the pleasure of seeing you (or at least when you get into port), we will communicate more particularly about the promotions in the professional line on board your fleet. Mr. Dundas is going down to Walmer again, and will probably see you if you should reach the Nore to-morrow; if not, as he wishes to see you at Walmer, we shall

¹ Dundas, on hearing of the victory, had written a congratulatory note to Spencer, in which he says 'An Irish peerage won't do now.'

send you down leave of absence, which you may avail yourself of when you think fit. It is but fair you should see him first,¹ otherwise there are very few persons in whose favour I should willingly delay the heartfelt pleasure I shall experience in shaking you by the hand.

I have not time for more before post ; therefore must conclude with assuring you how sincerely

I am,

Your very faithful and obedient

humble servant,

SPENCER.

THE KING TO SPENCER

Windsor. 17th October, 1797.

53 minutes past 6 P.M.

The particulars of the glorious action of the 11th which I have received from Earl Spencer add further value to that brilliant and memorable event.

I this morning signed the warrant for the preparation of a Patent of Viscount for Admiral Duncan, with the title of Viscount Duncan of Camperdown, as also a Patent of Baronet for Vice-Admiral Onslow.

GEORGE, R.

¹ See Introductory Note, *ante*, p. 177.

PART IV

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

MARCH 1797 TO MAY 1798

MR. PYBUS'S PROPOSAL FOR A NAVAL
ORDER OF MERIT

*Strength upon the Establishment of an Order of
Naval Merit*

If the captain of a frigate, or any other ship or vessel of war should take a ship of superior force, his gallantry would of course entitle him to the Order for that particular act of service.

If the same officer should afterwards distinguish himself by another action of a still more brilliant nature, either with a ship of much greater force than his own, or as the commander of a squadron inferior to that of the enemy, it would certainly be advisable to confer some additional mark of honour upon him for his subsequent conduct.

But as he could only wear one medal, the purpose would not be answered by a second gift exactly similar to the first.

The most obvious means of attaining this object is by establishing gradations of honour, either as the means of bestowing fresh rewards for repeated acts of courage, or of conferring the highest possible reward, when actions, such as those of Lord Howe and Sir John Jervis, exalt the officers at once to the highest pitch of naval merit ; and entitle them to the greatest possible distinction, even in the first instance.

It is therefore suggested that this Order should be divided into three classes ; all of which, whether consisting of admirals or captains, or both, should

wear the medal in the same manner, with or without the uniform ; and as the coat is almost constantly buttoned, the Order would certainly be less conspicuous, if worn round the neck, than at the button-hole. The distinction of classes, therefore, should rather depend upon the colour of the riband than upon any difference in the medal, or mode of wearing it ; and this species of distinction seems peculiarly to recommend itself, in a professional point of view, by a conformity with those designations of naval rank already established in the service by the succession of flags.

The 1st and highest class, therefore, should wear the medal suspended from the button-hole by a *red* riband.

The 2nd by a *white* riband.

The 3rd by a *blue* riband.

Under these regulations the officer, who might already be in possession of the riband belonging to the *third* class, would still look forward to his admission into the two superior classes ; and the reward would thus become as nearly commensurate as possible with the merit of the particular action.

To illustrate this by the two celebrated actions of the 1st of June and 14th of February : Suppose the Order to have been established immediately after the former. The red riband would, of course, have been given to Lord Howe ; the white one to the admirals of his fleet, and the blue one to such of the captains as particularly distinguished themselves upon that glorious day. A similar distribution would be made in the present instance to Sir John Jervis and the officers under his command. All his admirals, therefore, would be entitled to the white riband ; but as Admiral Parker is supposed to have obtained a blue one

already, as a captain on the 1st of June, a distinction should certainly be made between him and the other admirals of that fleet ; and as they would have the white, he should be promoted to the *red*. If, after having obtained the Order of the highest class, an officer should perform any new service of peculiar brilliancy, his Majesty would certainly feel a pleasure in curing the unavoidable deficiency of gradations beyond a given point by other supplemental honours, apportioned to the importance and merit of the action.

A register, distinctly recording all the different occasions upon which this Order shall have been conferred, should be carefully kept at the Admiralty ; and a similar entry should be made in a book, to be kept for that special purpose in the College of Arms, upon the certificate and warrant of this Board.

Two objects are aimed at by this regulation. First : An additional security for perpetuating the history of such gallant achievements, so creditable to the nation, and so justly a source of the most honourable pride to the families of individuals.

Secondly : To give a more embodied and substantial form to the Order itself, by connecting it with the principal office of honour in these kingdoms.

The navy should, and most unquestionably would, regard this Order, so peculiarly their own, as more honourable than the *Red Riband* of the *Bath*. Naval officers, therefore, whose services have already been rewarded by that Order, should have the option of relinquishing it for the Order of *Naval Merit*.

[*Endorsed* : ' Proposal for Naval Order of Merit by Mr. Pybus. 7th March, 1797. ']

SIR JOHN ORDE¹ TO SPENCER

31st March, 1797.

My dear Lord,—We have had no signals here except a few established by Sir Richard King, all made with flags different from what private ships are allowed, and of course cannot be repeated; and most of them for to call officers on board his ship did for weekly accounts or for boats.² Not a signal did I find here for a ship to cut or slip after an enemy, or to enable the Commander-in-Chief to direct his fleet in case of attack or being called upon for defensive operations. From this cause, should anything happen I might feel myself awkwardly situated. Might it not be well to establish Lord Howe's signals in this part of the world, and to give books to the admirals at the several ports to be issued in case of need? I really think there is little danger in such a measure, but much probable good to be expected. The enemy, I fear, may get our signals whenever they will, but a power by the usual means of changing the position of your flags would sufficiently prevent them from benefiting much by their possession, and the advantage of seeing one general code and instruction would be greater than I now shall attempt to describe.³

I have visited the hospital, my Lord, looked over the new instructions to the governor and talked with him about them. I admire the establishment much; think good exertion is all that is wanting to make it greatly useful. Cregh is a man

¹ Commander-in-chief at Plymouth.

² Sir Richard King, Bart. (Admiral of the Blue, 1795), was made commander-in-chief at Plymouth, December, 1794.

³ A general Signal Book for the whole Navy was not established till 1799. Lord Howe's code of 1794 was that in use in the Home fleets.

lamentable state of the discipline of the fleet, I beg leave to submit a hasty sketch of a peace establishment to your lordship's consideration.¹

I have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful
and obedient servant,
ST. VINCENT.

Ville de Paris, at anchor off Rota.

ENCLOSURE

Yachts to be sold as totally useless, tending to nothing but corrupt sinecures, too often given to worthless officers.

Guardships, so infamously rotten and corrupt, as to have sown the seeds of all the thefts, false musters, and general departure from the regulations of the service, and the men in them made idle and profligate. The annihilation of this establishment, therefore, becomes absolutely necessary. As a substitute, if it is thought proper to have line-of-battle ships in commission, I would recommend that the number determined on should be fitted in the autumn, and sail, under an active flag-officer, for the West India Islands the latter end of December or beginning of January; visit every one of them, either in corps or in detachments and rendezvous at Halifax in Novia Scotia in the month of July; there give the ships a thorough caulking with their own caulkers, overhaul their standing and running

¹ The negotiations between France and Austria, which led to the Treaty of Campo Formio and broke up the First Coalition, were now in progress. A general peace was in consequence regarded as inevitable, and Lord Malmesbury was about to start for Lille. See *ante*, p. 188.

rigging, repair their sails ; and contrive to reach Spithead by the middle of October, where they should remain till the latter end of December or beginning of January, as before appointed for their departure, and upon no account be permitted to come into Portsmouth harbour. If necessary to have a small naval force in the islands during the hurricane months, six small frigates or sloops of war sufficient.

Mediterranean should always have an officer of splendour, peremptorily ordered to visit Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli in person every summer, and return to Gibraltar *via* Naples, Leghorn, Genoa, touching perhaps at San Fiorenzo. For though I disapprove of any close connexion with Corsica, advantage may be taken in future wars, by preserving a communication with that perfidious race. An accurate survey to be made of the Zeparina Islands,¹ and the anchorage within them, and expert miners sent out to sink wells deep enough to obtain water. At Gibraltar both pits for careening should be kept in good repair ; tanks and baths built at the Naval Hospital ; the tanks under the eight-gun battery always kept in order, the approach to the Ragged Staff deepened by taking away the sand ; and tanks with pipes and spouts from them constructed in Rosia Bay for more expeditiously watering a fleet.

East Indies. No ships of war necessary there, unless required by the East India Company.

England, Scotland, and Ireland will require a number of frigates and sloops of war, to form officers and improve the masters, who are very deficient in pilot knowledge. All the ships serving there ought to have double the complement of

¹ The Zafarin Islands of our *Sailing Directions*, near the boundary of Morocco and Algeria. They were uninhabited.

lieutenants and masters, and treble of midshipmen ; in spring, summer and autumn they should be employed in surveying every part of the coast, and care taken that they are never idle, and that the general printed instructions are rigorously enforced in all their parts. To this effect, an able, firm and virtuous flag-officer ought to visit and muster them.

Size of Ships. Ville de Paris,¹ the 'ne plus ultra' of first rates.

Victory, a fine model for ships of ninety-eight guns.

Carnatic, the standard for seventy-fours.

Frigates are grown preposterous ; I never wish to see one larger than the Inconstant.

Repairs of ships, and improvements in dock-yards, to be set about with vigour, and carried on with perseverance. Much reform necessary in the civil department. If all the clerks in the dock-yards were dismissed with annuities, payable on one condition only, 'that they should reside fifty miles from any dock-yard,' the public would benefit exceedingly. The artificers are all thieves ; a new race perhaps would be as bad.

Transport Board, of no use whatever ; Captain James Bowen, fixed as he was before Lord Howe took him into the Queen Charlotte, would transact the business of that department much better, and at a small tithe of the expense. I say nothing of Newfoundland, because it seems a proper provision for a needy and meritorious officer.

Marines. A very considerable corps should

¹ Ville de Paris, 110 guns, 190 ft. gun-deck, 53 ft. beam, 2330 tons, built in 1795 ; Carnatic, 172 gun-deck, 48 beam, 1720 tons, was a copy of the French Courageux ; Inconstant was a 36-gun frigate of 890 tons, built in 1783. At the end of the last war a 44-gun class had been introduced and over a score had been built.

be kept up, and I hope to see the day when there is not another foot soldier in the kingdom, in Ireland, or the Colonies, except the King's Guards and Artillery. The colonels of regiments might be provided for during their lives by annuities equal to their present pay and emoluments.

J. JERVIS.

ORDER OF CABINET

SECRET.

19th July, 1797.

The King's servants, in order more effectually to secure the secrecy of the negotiations now carrying on at Lille, have agreed, not only that they will themselves hold themselves bound not to communicate to any persons whatever out of the Cabinet the particulars of what may pass between Lord Malmesbury and the French Ministers ; but have resolved that all the papers upon the subject shall be exclusively confined to the two Under-Secretaries of the Foreign Department, who are to be responsible for their being kept absolutely distinct and separate, and in such manner as to be accessible to no other persons whatever but the members of the Cabinet.

PITT TO SPENCER

PRIVATE.

Walmer Castle. Sunday, 22nd October, 1797.

My dear Lord,—I am much obliged to you for your very satisfactory letter on the subject of the Naval Estimates. The voting £4 per month per man under the heads of wages, victualling and

ordnance (in the proportion you mention) and a sum in the lump for the computed amount of wear and tear, together with the usual allowance for the ordinary and extraordinary, seems to me to be the most distinct and simple mode that can be adopted. I am aware that there must probably always arise some debt in the course of the year from expenses unforeseen or incapable of estimate, but we shall at least avoid the inaccuracy and looseness of the present mode, in which the sum asked for specific heads that may be estimated is notoriously inadequate. It does not strike me that, in the present state of the war, any inconvenience can arise from adding a specific estimate for transports and prisoners. In other circumstances it might be difficult or inexpedient to state the amount of them beforehand with precision, but even then a sum might be voted on account, with an express reserve for such exceedings as the course of the service may require. You are the best judge what number of men is indispensable for the great point to which we must look, and I shall be anxious to hear what distribution you propose; but I should be more and more inclined to hope, from every view I can take of the subject, that 110,000 men will be found amply sufficient.¹ If it can be so arranged, I am in hopes that I can answer for a Budget which will be likely to check a little the presumptions of Jacobins abroad and at home. I am rejoiced that the King is coming to see the fleet. We shall hope to meet you then, if nothing brings us to town before. I trust your idea of the Te

¹ This was the number voted in 1796, viz. 92,000 seamen and 18,000 marines. In 1797 it was 100,000 seamen and 20,000 marines. James, i. 444 and ii. 456. The ordnance vote appears to have been included in the pay and maintenance vote for the first time in 1797. The 'extraordinaries' included shipbuilding and repairs.

Deum at St. Paul's is not laid aside, though perhaps it may as well not take place till the first Sunday after the meeting of Parliament. Might it not be right to include in the object of the thanksgiving all the great naval successes of the war ?

Ever, my dear Lord,

Sincerely yours,

W. PITT.

(Received 23rd October.)

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Park Street. 5th November, 1797.

My dear Lord,—I return you Captain Blankett's letter, every word of which I know from a variety of accurate information to be correct.¹ I wish he had been more minute upon one point on which he is very capable to give information ; I mean the route which trading ships from India are obliged to take, the course of which makes them an easy prey to a hostile squadron stationed at the Cape. I have taken the proper steps to have the log-books of a variety of Indian captains and others examined privately in order to ascertain this proposition. But I take it for granted Captain Blankett from his naval knowledge must be peculiarly qualified to give information on that point. My mind is long and invariably made up to the conviction that the Cape of Good Hope is in truth and *literally* so the key to the Indian and China commerce, and that if the French are directly or indirectly

¹ Not found. The writer was probably Capt. John Blankett, who commanded the *America* in Elphinstone's squadron at the capture of the Cape in August, 1796.

in possession of the Island of Ceylon, the French Minister of War would deserve to lose his head if we kept our Indian territories four years. With those convictions impressed upon me as they are, you can be under no difficulty to guess what under all circumstances must guide my conduct in the discussion of these subjects. It is with difficulty I restrain myself from detailing those opinions when hints to the contrary are dropped from any quarter in the House of Commons ; but in the present moment discretion directs that I should do so, and I will continue to be *discreet* as long as possible.

Yours very truly,

HENRY DUNDAS.

SIR A. HAMOND¹ TO SPENCER

Navy Office. 13th April, 1798.

My Lord,—I have been maturely considering the question whether a fleet abroad is more or less expensive than the same number of ships on the Channel service ; and the more I examine the subject the stronger my opinion is, that a fleet of twenty sail-of-the-line with a proportion of frigates, once properly equipped and sent abroad, will cost much less in the space of three years than if they had remained at home. It is true, the part of the world they are sent to serve in will make some difference by increasing perhaps the difficulty of supplying them with stores and provisions ; but as

¹ Capt. Sir Andrew Snape Hamond, R.N. (member for Ipswich, 1796–1806), was made Comptroller in 1794 and was induced by Pitt to continue in the office after he was entitled to his flag, on a promise that he should have it later—a promise which was not fulfilled by the new Government in 1806, when Hamond left the Navy Board.

it is a well-known fact, that ships on foreign service make every article of their stores and furniture last considerably longer than when they have frequent opportunities of being supplied from the King's dockyards, I should apprehend the balance of expense would be in favour of the fleet abroad ; and the circumstance of the ships' companies not being paid wages when abroad makes a considerable saving on the interest of money.

I am collecting from the different offices the amount of all the bills drawn in the year 1796 whilst Lord St. Vincent's fleet was in the Mediterranean, and likewise what sums have been drawn for in the year 1797 since they have rendezvoused at Lisbon. They shall be forwarded as soon as the accounts can be made out ; but I do not see anything very satisfactory on the score of a *comparative* expense can be produced from them.

I have the honour to be

Your lordship's faithful and
obedient humble servant,

A. S. HAMOND.

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Somerset Place. Friday Morning.

My dear Lord,—

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The representations crowd upon me from every quarter full of apprehensions on the subject of the French prisoners. I have not of late conversed with you on that subject, and of course know not whether you have taken any

further steps respecting the Calf of Man or respecting prison ships for lodging those prisoners. If it can be done, this last plan seems the most immediate resource, as in case of disturbance they can be all disposed of very quickly by fire-ships or gun-boats.¹

Yours sincerely,
HENRY DUNDAS.

[*Endorsed* April 20, 1798.]

Draft of Lord Spencer's reply, endorsed.

Dear Sir,—

We have now two persons in the Isle of Man for the purpose of seeing what can be done to accommodate the prisoners there. We have fitted out all the ships that appeared most proper for prison ships, and did not carry that plan any further for the present on account of the prospect there was of this other expedient for them.

I cannot help thinking that some means might be taken by placing artillery in proper places to prevent the possibility of the prisoners getting out of Porchester Castle towards the land, and towards the water they cannot escape; but it will certainly be the best of all if we can contrive to remove them from thence.

Yours very truly,
SPENCER.

Admiralty. 20th April, 1798.

¹ Fire-ships, it may be recalled, were normally employed as light cruisers when not required for their special function.

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Sunday, $\frac{1}{2}$ past 6.

My dear Lord,—A note from Nepean informs me Sir Sidney Smith has made his escape. It is a noble opportunity for us to shew our magnanimity. Don't delay setting at liberty to return home Bergeret, who behaved so properly on the subject of his exchange with Sir Sidney.¹

Yours,
H. D.

(Received 6th May, 1798, from Mr. Dundas.)

¹ Capt. Bergeret of the *Virginie* (40) had been captured by Sir Edward Pellew in the *Indefatigable*, 20th to 21st April, 1796. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 244. In May he had been permitted to go to France on parole to arrange his exchange for Sir Sidney Smith. See Barrow, *Life of Sir Sidney Smith*, i. 226-31. The Directory refused the exchange, and from this letter it appears that Bergeret returned to England.

PART V

INVASION PAPERS

AND THE OSTEND EXPEDITION

1797-8

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

AFTER Bonaparte's great campaign in Italy and the peace of Campo Formio to which it led, the Directory once more turned their attention to the invasion of England—now their only formidable enemy. They also decided to employ in the desperate undertaking the triumphant young general of whose powers and ambition they were more than half afraid. What his real views of the enterprise were must always remain in doubt; political considerations were so confusedly mingled at this time with his military conduct, that his true motives cannot be fathomed, but certain it is that after examining closely the preparations for the invasion, he set his face against it, as altogether too hazardous, and turned towards Egypt.

The British Government, though sharing his opinion of the rashness of the plan, believed that the temper of the French people was such that no scheme was too mad for them, and took every precaution. The whole question of defence against invasion was studied anew, and one of the results was that there is found amongst Lord Spencer's papers a large bundle of memoranda on the subject from which the following papers are selected.

The traditional view is represented by two long papers, one of them, and probably both, from the hand of the veteran Admiral Sir Hugh Palliser, who could draw on personal experience stretching back to the War of Austrian Succession. The earlier of the two was hastily drawn up on the first alarm in 1793, before any action had been fought at sea, and the other four years later, when the victories of St. Vincent and Camperdown had finally given us control of the Narrow Seas.

In company with these is a paper by Captain Home Popham, who represented the new school of staff officer—a brilliant if unsteady genius who had gained his knowledge and reputation in coastal and riverine operations on the staff of the army in Flanders. His ideas are of special value, since besides being perhaps the most accomplished navigator of his time, he was regarded and trusted by soldiers as a man thoroughly conversant with the military point of view—so much so, indeed, that he was a figure much more in favour with the War Office than he was with the Admiralty.

Between the opinions of these two men stands an appreciation by Sir Charles Middleton, who, as Lord Barham, was destined to perfect the old principles and handle them with such consummate mastery in the culminating year of 1805.

As a contrast with these papers is given one by Admiral William Young, one of the Sea Lords, which represents pessimistic views apparently very rare in the navy. Not possessing the wide strategical outlook of the bigger men, he was obviously frightened by the idea of attempting to reoccupy the Mediterranean at a time when invasion was threatened. But his appreciation is of value for rightly estimating the judgment and courage of the Government and Lord St. Vincent when eventually the risk was accepted.

The appreciation and plans of Dundas, whose war direction has been so much derided, must at least arouse sympathy from the passion for offence which they display. Like his master, Lord Chatham, he held that to sit down and await attack was the one unpardonable sin. His master note was to seize every half chance to strike, and if striking was not possible, to try to scratch. This, whenever he found a finger free, he was prepared to do. He has been widely ridiculed for it on military grounds, but as these papers show, the grounds on which he based his policy were not purely military. It was to the moral effect he mainly looked ; and to this end he was prepared to risk much, so long as he could give heart to his country, maintain its offensive spirit, and worry the ill-established

Revolutionary Government with a perpetual menace of attack.

It was also regarded as a means of destroying the privateers' bases from which the main damage to our trade was done. The only definite operation on these lines with which this section deals was the attack on the canal locks at Ostend. Owing to the fine daring of the General, who insisted on landing in spite of the threatening weather, the success of the main idea was overshadowed by the surrender of the troops, who could not be re-embarked, but it will be seen to have been a thoroughly well-designed and brilliantly-executed enterprise. Fresh light, moreover, is thrown on its strategic purpose, for we can now see it as a well-considered operation for preventing the Dutch sections of the Invasion Flotilla from using the Bruges-Ostend canal to concentrate on those in the French channel ports.

It seems beyond doubt that the blow did prevent such a concentration by inland waters as had been intended, and it is clear that but for the half-hearted way in which the naval authorities went about the preparations, owing to the resentment that was felt at Popham's appointment, the thing would have been done in a spell of fine weather, and the troops brought off with hardly any loss. In that case the blow would have been repeated at Flushing immediately.

As it was, the real effect of Dundas's general policy is to be sought, not in the damage actually done, but in the widely-scattered condition in which the 'Army of England' was kept, and the fact that it could never be concentrated, as at no time was it much more than sufficient for the defence of the threatened coasts.

The hopelessness of the whole of the Directory's project in face of the British system of defence may be studied in Colonel Desbrière's *Projets et tentatives*, vol. i. pt. 5.

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Somerset Place. 13th January, [1797].

My dear Lord,—

I have [had] a very secret conversation with my namesake General Dundas¹ on the subject of invasion both of England and Ireland, and I would wish to talk it over with him in presence of Mr. Pitt and you. He has an idea that no attempt of invasion can be formidable unless a good anchorage can be secured before the landing commences, and that the great object ought to be to prevent their gaining that material preliminary. Upon that ground it is that he conceives there are much fewer points in both kingdoms where an invasion can be practically attempted than people are aware of, and that it is well worth the expense, which would be comparatively small, to take effectual measures to prevent a hostile fleet securing an anchorage in those points. I have told Mr. Pitt if he is disengaged on Sunday that I will ask General Dundas to dine with us on Sunday, and if you are also disengaged perhaps you would join us. Of course, we shall be happy to see Lady Spencer, if she has no better employment for herself that day.

I remain, my dear Lord,

Yours very sincerely,

HENRY DUNDAS.

¹ Major-General David Dundas (lieut.-general, 1797), apparently no relation of the War Minister, was now quartermaster-general. He was the author of the official tactical manuals, the originals of which had been the foundation of his fortunes. D.N.B. *sub voc.*

ADMIRAL YOUNG'S¹ OBSERVATIONS

February, 1797.

EXTRACT

The greatest number of ships that can now be sent to sea is nineteen ; the whole in commission, which may be considered as active ships, twenty-four ; of these we can never reasonably expect to have more than twenty fit for service. Seven have been lately launched, one of which may be fitted in a month ; the others it is impossible even to guess when they can be fitted, but having been all launched in the river, the necessity of being coppered in the same docks will necessarily require much time, as each will be in dock a fortnight. But were all these ships, as far as relates to the dockyard, ready for sea, it would be impossible to say when they would be likely to sail, as they would require nearly five thousand men to man them. There is also one ship in dock which will soon be fit to receive men were there any to give her ; but 'tis in vain to mention these ships, the fitting of which depends on the getting of seamen. Of the twenty-four ships mentioned above, there is not one that is not very short of complement, and some too short to be fit to send to sea, and we have not men to give them. The number of men obtained by bounties and by pressing is very much less than the number lost by death, sickness, and desertions, so that the want of seamen even for the ships already in commission increases every day, and those ships already want

¹ Rear-Admiral William Young, junior 'Professional' Lord of the Admiralty. He had commanded the *Fortitude* when she was beaten off by the famous *Mortella* Tower in Corsica in February, 1796.

2398 men to complete them to their short complement, which, added to 5000 required by the eight ships before mentioned, amounts to 7398. If that number could be raised, we might in two months, perhaps, have thirty-two ships commissioned and manned, of which twenty-six or twenty-seven might be considered as fit for sea. But who can believe that by any means which may be devised or by any measure which may be taken, it will be possible to raise one half of that number? The truth is that all the hopes of defence for this Kingdom and Ireland lies in twenty ships-of-the-line, for we must expect that four will always be under repair. Twenty sail-of-the-line, and many of them very badly manned, is all we can depend on to watch the motions of the fleet at Brest, and to defend our coasts from invasion, and can any man feel satisfied with such a defence? The French are certainly exerting themselves to the utmost to fit out their fleet, and it is by no means impossible that they should have as many ships in a short time as we have now. We certainly have information of their wanting stores and men; but in this we may be misinformed, and the amount of their distress may be much exaggerated. Men they certainly get by force, and few stores would be required for so short a voyage as across the Channel. What would be the state of this country if their fleet becomes, as we certainly ought to expect, nearly equal to all the ships that we could send to sea? What would become of our coasts if no ships were left to protect them? Will not the spirit of the enemy rise in proportion to his knowledge of our decreasing strength? If the French, expecting other employment for their troops, should be in doubt whether to persist in, or give up, their plan of invasion, will not our

lessened force determine them in favour of the former? If they doubt whether to risk their boats across the Channel, will not the certainty of no ships being on our coasts to meet them determine them to sail, and if they do sail, when we have no ships to meet them, who but may tremble for the consequence? With the ships under Sir R. Curtis we have few enough and may consider ourselves as secure from invasion. Without it, we are exposed to the probability of the French coming over. We are exposed to no great improbability of absolute destruction [if] Curtis with eight sail-of-the-line is sent away that the expedition from Toulon may be prevented from succeeding in whatever it may attempt. We know not its destination. If it be destined against Naples or any other part of Italy and our fleet arrive in time, which is not probable, it may certainly be stopped if not sailed, or destroyed if it is; and this may be an object, could it be ascertained, for running some risk, but whether all we now run, is more than I will say. But if this squadron be going to Egypt or the Black Sea, will the preventing such an expedition be a sufficient reason for any risk whatever? Can that justify the leaving Lord St. Vincent so much weaker than the fleet he is to block up, and our country so exposed at home? But should this expedition be intended for Ireland, and should it, as it probably would, pass our squadron unseen, and arrive at Ireland or at Brest, while we are no stronger than this detachment, if Curtis leaves us, the consequences are little to be doubted. We could not in such a situation call home Lord St. Vincent with his fleet, supposing it possible that we had time to do so, without leaving the squadron in the Mediterranean exposed to any superiority of force which Spain

might send against it. I must therefore declare that to me this detaching of so great a part of our defence, that a squadron may be sent up the Mediterranean, may be attended with the most dreadful consequences to the country, and that there is no certain, nor even very probable effect, sufficient to justify its being done.

What may not the Irish say if they are told that we cannot find ships for their protection when we have enough to spare for an expedition so distant that the event of it will probably not be known till the war is at an end, and will therefore have no effect even on the making of peace?

If the Spaniards have eight ships-of-the-line ready for sea at Ferrol as asserted, and they should be sent to the West Indies, where shall we find ships enough to detach to that station, if four of those we now have are sent away?

If the Dutch squadrons in Flushing and the Texel are as strong and as nearly ready for sea as they are represented, how shall we reinforce our North Sea squadron if four of the Western fleet are sent away?

If the Spaniards passing Sir John Jervis, as they may certainly do, should get to the northward before him, shall we have more ships than we shall want although four ships were not sent away?

If we keep in England only as many ships as may be thought sufficient to meet and fight the combined fleet of the enemy, where shall we find ships for the Downs, for St. Helens, or for any other points which it may be thought necessary to defend? With such a number only, must we not leave the whole of our coast defenceless whenever the fleet puts to sea? All that we have may perhaps be found too few for the various services that will be required of them; how then

shall we send any of them away? If we have only as many as may be required to meet the enemy, how shall we spare ships for repairs and refitting, which some of them will frequently stand in need of, and where shall we find convoys for the outward and homeward bound fleets? All this which is said of ships-of-the-line may be said of frigates, of which we have not enough for the services which are every day required of them.

If the ships intended for this expedition were not now fitting for foreign service, we should have ships enough to send to the Downs without preventing Lord Bridport from going to sea.

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

PRIVATE.

Parliament Street. 16th November, 1797.

My dear Lord,—I am anxious to have a confidential conversation with your lordship and Mr. Pitt on the subject, which necessarily involves both our departments. Our army is a very small one, but we must make the best we can of it with a view to the *joint* defence of Great Britain and Ireland, comprehending under that idea some mode of at least alarming our enemies along their own coasts. I am just going to the country, but at any place, town or country and at any hour on any day I shall be ready to meet your lordship and Mr. Pitt, if you will settle it with him.¹ Having wrote to you, I think it needless to write likewise to Mr. Pitt, but will hope to hear soon either from you or him.

I remain, my dear Lord,

Yours sincerely,

HENRY DUNDAS.

¹ *Note by Lord Spencer:* 'That I should see Mr. Pitt to-morrow and fix on a time with him.'

MEMORANDUM ON HOME DEFENCE ¹

SUGGESTIONS RELATIVE TO THE DEFENCE OF OUR OWN COAST COMBINED WITH THE MEANS OF ANNOYING THE COASTS OF THE ENEMY.

It is proposed to form four light squadrons, and to attach to each, or at least to three of them, an adequate land force to be embarked in 44-gun ships ² or other ships of war *armé-en-flûte*, for the purpose of co-operation either in offensive or defensive measures, as circumstances might suggest. These squadrons to be so stationed as to act separately or together as required.

(1) ³

It is proposed that the first squadron should be attached to the North Sea fleet, to keep in alarm the coasts of Holland and Flanders including Dunkirk, which last place the commanding officer should be particularly instructed to watch, blockade and annoy, according to circumstances.

This squadron might rendezvous occasionally at Yarmouth, in the Downs or Gravelines Pits.

(2) ⁴

The second should watch the enemy's coast,

¹ Unsigned and undated, but probably by Dundas at the end of 1797. See his letter of 9th February, 1798, to Spencer, *post*, p. 286.

² The two-decked 'forty-fours,' to which he probably refers, were now regarded as practically obsolete, but there were still eight on the list, six of which were in commission. James, ii. 477.

³ *In margin*—1 ship-of-the-line, 4 frigates, 2 bombs, 3 gun-boats, and about 2000 land forces, if they can be spared, but they are not so essential for this division as for the three other squadrons.

⁴ *In margin*—1 ship-of-the-line, 3 frigates, 3 bombs, 4 gun-boats, 4 forty-fours, with 2500 troops.

and do as much mischief as possible from Calais to Cherbourg or perhaps St. Malo.

Principal stations, Portland Road and St. Marcou.

(3) ¹

The third to take charge of the French coast from St. Malo to Rochefort.

Principal stations, Cawsand Bay or Falmouth.

(4) ²

The fourth to watch the enemy from Bordeaux to Spain, to attend occasionally to the coast of Ireland, or to join any other of the above squadrons, if necessary.

Principal stations, Milford Haven and Falmouth.

Considered as a part of defensive system, it would be the duty of these three last-mentioned squadrons to defend the Channel and the coast from the South Foreland to Milford Haven, whilst the Channel fleet would be cruising or stationed, either in divisions or collected, as may appear best adapted, according to existing circumstances, to watch the enemy at Brest or to annoy them in any other quarter.

The advantages of this system would be to enable you to strike sudden and severe blows whenever they could be undertaken with a prospect of success, such as burning the enemy's shipping and flat-boats, destroying their arsenals, magazines and towns, and laying them under contribution if it should be thought proper. As

¹ *In margin*—2 ships-of-the-line, 3 or 4 frigates, 1 sloop, 4 gun-boats, 44-gun ships to receive 2500 to 3000 men.

² *In margin*—2 ships-of-the-line, 3 frigates, 1 sloop, 2 gun-boats, 44-gun ships to receive 2500 land forces.

a measure of defence it presents the advantage of being able to convey with safety and dispatch to any given point of our own coast a large body of troops. In short, nothing appears better calculated on the one hand to keep this country in a state of security, and on the other the enemy in a constant state of awe and apprehension, than a sufficient movable sea-and-land force, calculated to act with celerity, and to seize every favourable occasion of destroying their preparations and attacking them on their own coast. Considered as a plan of humbling and distressing the enemy, of creating a conviction in France that all their projects of invasion are fraught with disgrace and ruin, and thereby to increase the clamour for peace and against the present Government, it is the best that can be undertaken with our present means.

It is also the best in another view, not less essential to the support of the war at home, namely, as affording the most effectual means of counteracting the manœuvres of the disaffected, and the alarms of the desponding, of showing the energy of the nation, and above all of keeping alive the *spirit of enterprise* by which alone our *public spirit* (now fortunately raised by the late conduct of the enemy) can be maintained in a disposition suitable to the difficulties of our situation.

Before we proceed to mention the several places on the enemy's coast which appear vulnerable, or on which at least some impression may be made, it may be proper to remark that if the plan should be adopted, measures must be taken to form the several corps of troops, and the ships of war and armed transports must be appointed and collected so as to be at sea by the end of March at the latest. In the winter months the naval

force might be employed occasionally in annoying the enemy's coast, cutting off their supplies and capturing their privateers.

We shall not in this paper enter into any particulars respecting the coasts of Holland and Flanders. Dunkirk we have already noticed, and the first place on which we shall observe upon the French coast is Calais.

The town and harbour are perhaps too far from the coast for much mischief to be done except by shells, as the coast is too shoal for ships to approach. The wooden forts which defend the approach to the harbour might probably be destroyed by hot shot and shells. The harbour is capable of containing from 200 to 300 small vessels.

The next port is Boulogne. The harbour is spacious, and a great rendezvous of privateers. The town contains at least 15,000 inhabitants. The lower town next the harbour and shipping in the harbour are within the reach of shells.

Dieppe and its harbour are also open to an attack of this nature.

St. Valery is doubtful, but this point may easily be ascertained.

Fécamp cannot be attacked without landing troops, but it is not supposed capable of any resistance against 2000 or 3000 men.

The next point, and one of the principal ports, is Havre. It has a harbour capable of containing 500 sail of shipping, with an inner basin where five or six frigates may lie. The town is very populous and is a great depôt of merchandise for Paris, to the supply of which it very much contributes. Both the town and harbour are assailable from the Little Road,¹ towards the

¹ Little Road is inside the banks immediately off the town.

entrance of the *Seine*. They were bombarded with success in 1759 by Lord Rodney.

La Hogue and Barfleur are also assailable, but they are places of little importance.

Cherbourg cannot be attacked without a large army, but the works on the Isle Pelée and the shipping may probably be annoyed.

Granville is within the reach of shells.

St. Malo, it is conceived, may be damaged by shells on one side.

To destroy Roscoff, the Isle of Bas¹ must be secured. This will be easy with a few troops, and having it in our possession, the town is entirely open.

The fort and town of Camaret and the town of St. Mathieu may probably be damaged by shells, but this might require further information, as the batteries by which they are defended are numerous and heavy.

The bay and town of Hodierne within which the enemy's convoys always anchor, are fortified with five batteries. This place may be destroyed by shells, or all the batteries and town taken, by disembarking at a little distance 800 to 1000 men, who would seize the heights and take all the batteries in the rear.

The small harbour of Pont l'Abbé, and the town and harbour of Concarneau within the Glenan Islands, may be destroyed by shells, or taken by a small body of troops; the latter frequently affords shelter to the enemy's convoys and privateers.

In order to attack L'Orient, the Isle de Groix must first be occupied. A corps of 3000 men

¹ MS. 'Batz,' but he of course means Bas, which is separated from the mainland by a narrow channel immediately west of Roscoff.

might easily take it, and then the port and lower town might be destroyed.

It appears doubtful whether the Croisic, St. Nazaire, and Paimbœuf, situated at the entrance of the *Loire*, can be attacked. This must be determined by an accurate knowledge of soundings, which can only be had on the spot; but as these and the other towns in this river are the principal nurseries of privateers, it may perhaps be worth while to examine the river and ascertain what can be done by the boats of the squadrons with the troops, in destroying the shipping, towns, &c.

All the towns in the Bay of Bourgneuf are easily open. St. Gilles and Sables d'Olonne may be entirely destroyed by shells. The population of this last place is about 1200, and it carries on a considerable coasting trade.

The town of St. Martin in the Isle of Rhé may be damaged by shells. The island itself, which is very fertile, may be taken if thought an object. It commands the entrance into Rochefort.

Rochelle is entirely open, and may be bombarded from Basque Roads, which our ships may occupy whenever they please.

If the enemy should have any shipping at anchor under the Isle d'Aix, they may be bombarded from the road.

The Isle d'Oleron may be easily seized if thought an object.

No mention is here made of the coast within Quiberon Bay, as that country, though kept in awe at present, still continues friendly to us.

On the coast of Spain there are likewise several places that might be attacked and destroyed by shells, &c.

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Enclosing Memorandum by Sir Hugh Palliser

Wimbledon.

Monday Evening [29th January, 1798].

My dear Lord,—I always make a rule of taking a copy of any material paper communicated to me by Mr. Pitt, because unless I do so I am by no means certain I can ever see it again. Owing to that practice I can furnish you with the perusal of the paper you and Mr. Pitt were so anxious to recover in the course of our conversation here last Saturday. I see it is in my daughter's hand, and you'll be so good as return me either it or a copy of it. Looking over a collection of papers to-day upon the subject of invasion, I found it in the box, and I read it with infinite satisfaction; for although I do not exactly agree with him as to one or two circumstances in the concluding paragraphs of the memorandum, I see that in the great and material outlines of the business, the sentiments of that great and valuable officer, after a life of long and useful experience, entirely concur in the ideas we are about to adopt.¹

I was in hopes of hearing from your lordship before this time that you had so far fixed your arrangements as to enable me to call upon the Duke of York to name the land associates. I am not so

¹ From the endorsement on the paper which follows, it appears that it had been written in 1793 by Admiral Sir Hugh Palliser, who, having entered the service in 1735, had served in three wars, and though he ruined his reputation by his behaviour to Keppel after the battle of Ushant, was regarded as a highly capable officer, and particularly by Sir Charles Saunders, under whom he served at Quebec and in the Mediterranean. He died in 1796, Governor of Greenwich Hospital. In 1793 he was seventy years old.

blind but that I can see through your difficulties ; but depend upon it, my dear Lord, it will neither be Lord Hugh Seymour nor Admiral Young, nor Admiral Gambier that will be thought of by the public on the day of calamity.¹ Lord Spencer must answer for it. Exercise your understanding, and if your Board don't support your opinions and your measures, send them to sea or find others in their place ; for it is impossible that any person acting in the present awful crisis can agree to be the partners and sharers in responsibility with any but those who are embarked on the same bottoms of responsibility. You *alone* are so at the Board of Admiralty.

I am, my dear Lord,

Yours very sincerely,

HENRY DUNDAS.

Private. (29th January, 1798. Received 30th.)

MEMORANDUM BY ADMIRAL SIR HUGH PALLISER

7th February, 1793.

SOME THOUGHTS CONCERNING AN INVASION FROM FRANCE ; BY AN OLD SEA OFFICER, WHICH BEING OCCASIONALLY REFERRED TO, SOME HINTS THEREIN MAY POSSIBLY BE FOUND USEFUL.

Perhaps the best plan of defence against an invasion from France will be continually to alarm their coast by active expeditions, and thereby weaken their army opposed to our allies, and favour the French Loyalists, if ever they should be

¹ The officers named were the three naval members of the Board.

able to make head against the Republicans. At the same time it may interrupt them getting vessels together for invading this country.

I am not one of those who are alarmed and frightened at every threat or preparation made in France for invading this country, because by often and long considering the subject, I have satisfied myself that it is not so easy or practicable as many people imagine, who, because of the short distance, the open coast, and numerous landing places, conclude it is impossible to prevent an enemy from landing.

I also differ in opinion from those who maintain that our best security consists in our country being so well adapted for a defensive war after an enemy is landed. I know not what was the state of the country in former times, but it must be very much altered, since turnpike roads have been made from all parts of the sea coast up to the great roads leading to the capital.

Upon the whole I think it is impossible for the French to land an army in England unopposed, unless we should ever be so negligent as to be surprised and uninformed when the French may have powerful armies in motion, and a powerful fleet equipped and at sea ; or unless the people *in general* should be disaffected to Government, and invite a foreign force over to bring about a revolution, as was the case when the Prince of Orange came over. But that is not now the case, although there is no doubt but the diabolical doctrine in the writings of Tom Paine, Priestley and others have poisoned many weak minds here, as well as those of Voltaire, Rousseau, and others have done in France ; and there is no doubt but emissaries from the French Republicans have been employed with the wretches above mentioned in this country

for bringing about the like anarchy, confusion, and bloody scenes here, as they have done in France. However, as the alarm, and spirit of watchfulness is gone abroad, I hope nothing from them will happen to impede the success of our arms in case a war is unavoidable. Nevertheless if they should shew themselves, no doubt they will be instantly crushed, and never suffered to get to a head.

Under the present circumstances, it seems necessary to have a plan of defence formed to act upon, in preparing of which a variety of things occur ; some parts thereof have been adopted on former occasions.

A Fleet of the Line of Battle

First, it will be requisite always to keep in readiness a fleet of the line and a proper number of frigates, equal to the greatest force that it may be known the enemy may intend, or can possibly have, to cover their invading army ; their fleet to be closely watched and attacked as soon as they can be met with ; ours taking a station open to receive reinforcements from time to time, and to avoid being attacked in port. If the fleet be inferior to the enemy, endeavour to decoy them into dangerous navigation, as was done in the year 1588.

Squadrons of Frigates and Small Vessels Armed

To oppose their fleet of the line being *thus provided for*, the next thing is to provide the utmost number of frigates and armed vessels to intercept their fleet of transports, as soon as they can be attacked after they leave their ports. These squadrons of armed vessels to be stationed in different divisions as circumstances may make

proper, and to be put under the command of able, active and *trusty* officers.

A Case stated which it is supposed cannot be guarded against

Those who think it easy to invade this country, *I have heard* argue thus : Suppose a great army assembled on the opposite part on the French coast, provided with all things requisite for such an expedition, and in readiness to embark at an hour's warning on board flat-bottom boats, and other proper vessels ready provided at Dunkirk, Calais, or Boulogne, Dieppe, Havre and Cherbourg, and suppose a hard gale of wind at S.W. forces our cruisers from their stations into the Downs, to St. Helens, or other roads for shelter ; that being a fair wind to cross the Channel, they say, the enemy may come out and land, whilst our cruisers can't come out.

Answer to the above Case

To prove this impracticable, a great many things may be observed, viz. :

Whenever it blows so hard that our cruisers cannot keep the sea, the weather will be *too bad* for flat-bottom boats and such other craft (as their harbours will admit) to come over full of troops ; and when the weather moderates, the same time as will be necessary for their army to embark and get out of port, will be more than necessary for the cruisers to return to their stations.

But suppose they should come out with a hard S.W. wind, where could they fetch to land in a body, except they run into or pass the Downs ? It is not likely their sea officers would advise such an attempt under the circumstances.

Any body of men that may embark from the above-mentioned ports, without a superior sea force to ours opposed to them, must be destroyed, taken or dispersed at least, so as to prevent their landing at any appointed rendezvous, or in considerable bodies together in one place.

The French ports above mentioned [*in margin*, Dunkirk, Calais, Boulogne, Dieppe, Havre] are all tide harbours. The army necessary to invade this country cannot be embarked together at any of the above ports, but in detachments from the different ports.

It is not probable that all the transports can get out of any harbour in one tide, and it is doubtful whether the whole can get out except during spring tides. It is much less probable that the whole can be all got out at all the ports at one and the same time, so they may be exposed to be attacked in detail, as they come out. But even if practicable for them all to get out at one appointed time and to sail directly to a given rendezvous, it must be very uncertain their being able to join and land together at one appointed place, considering the distance of those ports from each other, the uncertainty of winds, weather and tides, besides the interruption to be given to the different detachments by our cruisers.

It is expected they cannot make great resistance in such craft, crowded as they will be (and perhaps sea-sick), loaded with baggage, camp-equipage, provisions, &c.

It is said, in the year 1745, they had collected at Boulogne 180 flat-bottom boats, in which 9000 troops were destined to embark, and 3000 more at Calais to embark in sixty such vessels, supposed each to carry fifty soldiers. If it is thought that other embarkations may be made at Dunkirk

and Havre in larger vessels, say on a medium of 200 tons, to the amount of 5000 soldiers at each, their all getting out in one tide at either place and proceeding to the rendezvous for the whole, without being attacked in their way, is very precarious, or if they anchor in the roads before those ports.

*Not to depend too much on the Supposed Difficulties
on their Part*

Nevertheless, too much dependence should not be laid on those difficulties on their part, nor on the reasoning built thereon, nor upon their supposed ignorance of our coast, or on their making blunders for want of pilots, &c., for we cannot be too much on our guard on such an occasion as this ; for there is no knowing what such an enthusiastic, mad, ferocious nation as the French now are may attempt, especially if they depend on assistance from those here whom they have deluded into their way of thinking, who it is to be feared are that class of people from amongst whom an army must be raised to fight them when they land ; but it is to be hoped that all others will be unanimous when our country, constitution and liberty are in danger.

Then the French cannot hope to succeed, nor ever will, but by the assistance of rebellion, treachery and massacres.

Uncertainty of the Enemy's Plan of Operations

Whatever may be the enemy's plan of invasion, whether by landing their whole army in one place, or by strong detachments in different places (trusting perhaps to insurrections in different parts

of the kingdom) in order to divide our forces, and so for the whole by different routes from different quarters to march towards the capital (for I suppose they will not land with any other view), I am of opinion the utmost resistance should be made before they land, which at all events must retard their operations and disperse them.

Armed Vessels

For this purpose I would recommend a great number of small vessels (on a certain appearance of invasion) to be immediately procured, that are capable of being armed with small cannon, swivel guns, carronades and wall-pieces on swivels, and hand grenades ; those of small draft of water to be preferred, that they may follow their flat-boats over sands into shallow water, and home to the shore to interrupt their disembarking. Perhaps brigs built for the coal trade of 150 tons would be the fittest for this service. They being flat-floored, roomy vessels, small draft of water, may be expeditiously fitted for guns and swivels in merchants' yards, and would be applicable to various services on either the French or English coast, offensive or defensive.

In preparation for this measure, I would recommend a number of swivel stocks to be provided at Deptford, Woolwich, and Sheerness yards, to be in readiness with bolts, &c., to be fixed in those vessels as fast as they are procured.

The Board of Ordnance to report the number of small cannon, swivels and wall-pieces they can furnish ; and if more should be wanted than they have, to provide them from private merchants' stores. Armed vessels to be barricaded with cork, that is panels of cork to be a firm barricade

all round or in frames to be fixed occasionally for service against musquetry by the men on board in the way they think best, each panel to be breast high ; a quantity of such to be also prepared ready to be issued as wanted.

Small Arms, &c.

Every sort of weapon may be useful under the various circumstances they may be engaged in. For each man on board there should be—

- 1 musquet and bayonet.
- 1 pistol.
- 1 cartouch box.
- 1 cutlass.
- 1 pike.

Hand-grenades, small cannon, swivel-guns, and wall-pieces, as many as can be placed in them. Cartridges filled in boxes, a sufficient number.

Gunners' Stores

Shot, a proper proportion, powder in half-barrels, and other gunners' stores in proportion, and some axes for cutting away masts and rigging.

Stationed to Watch the Enemy's Ports

These armed vessels to be divided into squads, with a proper number of frigates to each, and to be stationed as afore-mentioned.

Provisions, Slops and Necessaries to be ready for those Vessels

A disposition should also be made for expeditiously furnishing such armed vessels with beds, hammocks, and slops ; with water and provisions for their companies, which I will suppose to be forty,

fifty, or sixty men each. All lieutenants unemployed and able to serve, to command those armed vessels, and to have the same allowance for the time as lieutenants commanding cutters ; and order them to the Nore and Downs to follow the orders of the Commander-in-chief there ; or if such a number of lieutenants cannot be found, and, as it may be supposed, other officers or petty officers cannot be got after the fleet is manned, upon such an emergency the boatswains, gunners, and carpenters of the uncommissioned ships in the river Thames and Medway, who are able, would be very proper persons to be put on board them with a proper allowance.

Custom-house Excise Vessels, Yachts, &c.

All the Custom-house and Excise vessels to be well armed, and with the yachts and dock-yard craft, to be put under the commanding officers at the Nore and in the Downs.

The Commissioner at Chatham to be ordered to answer all demands from the commanding officer at the Nore.

Ships under Line or under Seventy-four or Sixty-four Guns in the Downs

A sufficient number of ships of war, suppose all under seventy-four or sixty-four guns, should be in the Downs to make detachments to the northward, to the north coast, or to Scotland, in case the enemy should send that way a force with frigates and larger transports from Dunkirk and Ostend.

One or more old three-deckers to be placed to defend the entrance of the Thames.

Pilots

Apprise the Trinity House to provide for supplying pressing demands for pilots, to be sent to the commanding officer at the Nore.

*General Orders on falling in with the Enemy's
Transports*

In case of falling in with the enemy's transports, the general order to be for the King's ships to attack their convoy, and every armed ship to do his utmost to destroy or disable as many of the transports as possible ; not to wait to take possession, but to oblige the enemy's soldiers to throw their arms and ammunition overboard, disable them in their masts and rigging, and leave them at the mercy of the sea ; but not to lose time in taking possession, but to pursue the rest.

*A Plan to be adopted for moving Buoys,
Beacons, &c.*

A measure to be adopted by the Trinity House for readily moving buoys, beacons, &c., in case of an enemy's fleet attempting to come up the Thames, the plan to be sent to the commanding officers at the Nore and Downs. This plan should also provide for readily replacing them, when the danger is past, or temporary vessels to lie in their places for the safety of our own shipping ; such temporary vessels to be distinguished by flags and pennants of different colours by day, and by numbers of lights in the night ; suppose in all channels downward from the Nore to have one light on the larboard side going down, and two on the starboard side, &c.

Hire Privateers

Any privateers in port, that are equipped, to be engaged on such an occasion to join the King's ships.

For taking up Vessels to be Armed

The agent employed by the Navy Board to take up transports, to be employed to look out in the river for proper vessels to be armed immediately, of 150 or 200 tons.

Post-office Packets

Post-office to order such of their packets as are out of employ to join the ships in the Downs and at the Nore.

Break-up Rendezvous

Officers at rendezvous in town to repair on board tenders and armed vessels to the Nore for orders from the commanding officers there.

Pilots for the Coast of Norfolk and Suffolk

Naval officer at Harwich to send some good pilots for the coast of Norfolk and Suffolk as far as Yarmouth to the commanding officer at the Nore.

Six Weeks' Volunteers

On such an emergency a proclamation or advertisement for all such men as will immediately enter for six weeks or two months, or when the alarm of immediate invasion is over, shall at the end of that time be paid and discharged, with a

protection against being pressed for six weeks afterwards.

Store-ships and victuallers to be sent to lie in the Downs and the Nore, for supply of the armament ; small casks for the benefit of stowage in the small armed vessels, and with coals and candles.

Commanding Officers to Communicate

The commanding officer in the Downs and Nore to communicate their intelligence to each other.

Hire several Folkestone cutters for scouts or express vessels.

Holland

If ever the French should get possession of Holland, they will immediately get what is now their greatest want for invading this country, viz., great numbers of vessels of all kinds fit for transports, and many ports where they can safely rendezvous, and from whence they can sail at any time in a body together, or in detachments, with fleets of ships-of-war to convoy them.

An invading enemy from that quarter would be far more difficult to guard against than from the opposite coast of France.

Embarkations at Brest, Quiberon Bay and Basque Road

If the French should embark a large army in large transports at Brest, Quiberon Bay or Basque Road, and intend to invade Ireland or the west parts of England, this will require a separate plan for guarding against them. Particularly—

besides a sufficient squadron of men-of-war to oppose their convoy, also a number of stout armed ships to attack their transports ; for I cannot consider a plan of defence by sea complete without a proper fleet of armed ships to attack the enemy's transports before they land the troops, while the men-of-war may be engaged.

The French have now laid an embargo on all English and Dutch ships in their ports, by which they may probably have got possession of several Dutch hoys, doggers, and ketches, for there usually are many such in their ports in the Bay of Biscay for salt for their fisheries.

These vessels are very flat-bottomed, and may be soon made as fit for embarking troops as the flat-bottom boats they used to build for the purpose, or better, for they are safe vessels in any sea or weather.

16th October, 1793.

A CONTINUATION OF THOUGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS
FOR FORMING A PLAN OF DEFENCE AGAINST
AN INVASION ; MORE PARTICULARLY FOR
DEFENCE OF THE APPROACHES TO THE CAPITAL
BY SEA AND THE RIVER THAMES.

What has been said, and what here follows on this subject, may be considered as the outlines for forming a more perfect plan of defence in time of the greatest danger that may require our utmost exertions ; which may occasionally be provided in the whole, or in part only, in proportion to authentic accounts of preparations making by the enemy ; always keeping pace with them, so as to be always ready to oppose them ; although their preparations should be only intended to

alarm, and divert our forces from being employed on the continent or on foreign expeditions.

We are told that the French have determined on invading England ; that the Convention has taken up all vessels of every kind in all their ports for this purpose ; that they have ordered all their seamen, carpenters, smiths, and other artificers found in their armies to be sent with the utmost speed to their seaports, there to be employed in preparations for this purpose.

A knowledge of the number and kind of vessels in their ports in the *Channel* will lead towards forming a judgment of what they *can possibly* undertake from thence, although there is no knowing what desperation, madness, and revenge may drive them to attempt ; even things the least expected, or the least probable of succeeding, if the governing power in France can still keep up the spirit of enthusiasm amongst their men.

The vessels that have been prepared at different times by the French for invading this country have been large flat-bottomed boats built for the purpose with a deck ; and of such a construction as seemed well calculated for running over and suddenly landing a body of men and for nothing else ; they being defenceless, low-built, flush fore and aft, and without barracadoes against musquetry. They had each two six-pounders pointed over their bows, and two over their sterns *en barbette*. Mr. Stephens has a model of one.¹

If they make the attempt now, it must be in other kinds of vessels, as they have not now time to build such. I suppose if they embark at present it will be in all kinds of merchant ships and fishing shallops.

¹ Mr. Philip Stevens was First Secretary till 3rd March, 1795.

When they intended to come over in flat-bottomed boats, it may be concluded they intended to run them directly on shore abreast of each other, and thus form a battery to clear the shore for landing the men, &c. ; and another battery astern to defend themselves that way, whilst they disembarked with their baggage, &c.

To attempt to invade this country by these means seems to be romantic and absurd, unless they at the same time should be wholly masters at sea ; or are certain of not being opposed on the way, and are very confident of being well received on landing by a powerful faction or a rebel army.

Under whatever circumstances they may make the attempt with those kinds of vessels, it should seem they must, like Caesar, resolve to burn or abandon their vessels ; and determine to conquer or be conquered.

To oppose their landing from such craft as afore-mentioned, the properest vessels are armed vessels, such as are proposed in the first part of this plan (being fit to encounter them either at sea or as they come in with the coast in shallow waters, &c.), and which we must likewise resolve to sacrifice if necessary for the purpose of preventing an enemy disembarking. This should be explained in the instructions to each officer commanding those armed vessels,¹ and that they are to follow the enemy ; whether they run on shore on the open coast, or into creeks and harbours, they are to follow them pell-mell. They will have great advantages over the enemy's vessels, being

¹ *In margin*—It seems necessary this should be given out in orders, least any shy officer should plead he durst not wilfully run the risk of losing the ship. At the same time promotion and reward should be held out to those who may perform essential service on such occasions.

superiorly armed, barracadoed, and so much higher they will overlook them ; and being flat-floored, will sit upright on almost any ground ; therefore it is expected they may prevent an enemy landing in force till the King's forces stationed on the coast are assembled to march down and join in attacking them.

All those armed ships, large and small, might be fitted with bed places, the same as transports are, that they may be occasionally so employed. Thus they will be always ready at a moment's warning to transport men from one part of the coast to another, as circumstances may require ; or to be employed in Ireland, or on the coasts of France or Holland occasionally. In the meantime, till certain intelligence is received that preparations are actually making for an invasion which may require them to be got together, they may be employed as coasting convoys (within reach of being called together at a short notice). This will set all our frigates and sloops at liberty to pursue the enemy's privateers, &c.

I suppose each of the smaller armed transports on occasion may take on board sixty soldiers, over and above their complements as armed ships, and the large ones 120 each, viz. :—

20 at 60 each	1200
10 at 120 each	1200
	<hr/>
Total	2400

Suppose half that number of spare beds to be constantly on board each ship ready for such service.

The guns on board these armed ships should be six-pounders at least ; less guns will be too trifling.

In fitting out these armed ships, care should be taken that they are not loaded too deep, and thereby defeat the service they are principally intended for, viz., being of light draft, to follow the enemy's transports into shallow waters, as mentioned in the first part.

It is not to be doubted but, whenever an enemy may seriously intend to invade this country, they will be supplied with sufficient pilots for any part of the coast from amongst the outlawed smugglers and others to be procured by their agents, and to be found amongst the disaffected who have imbibed the dangerous principles of Tom Paine, &c. May not those who refused to pilot the King's ships to the coast of France against Dunkirk be suspected: at least they should be carefully watched.

I know of nothing to prevent an enemy entering and sailing up the Thames, except the difficult navigation in the approaches; and Tilbury fort, and the batteries at Gravesend.

As to Tilbury fort and batteries, I consider them as nothing; for a ship passing with a strong tide and a fresh, fair wind (where there is no boom across) she can't receive above one fire from each gun, and that will be like shooting flying with cannon. Any numbers may pass at the same time. This has been experienced in late wars; particularly at Quebec during the siege: our frigates, transports and boats passed and repassed the town without receiving any damage. There the river is only 11,000 yards over.

I never heard it proposed to lay a boom across at Tilbury, nor do I know whether it is practicable; but if it is practicable, such an one as is prepared at Portsmouth would be the best: which is a large mooring chain floated with large transport buoys,

and to be placed angularly, and secured with anchors, &c., at the ends on both shores, and others in the channel above and below to steady it : to be hove across by capstands when wanted.

Query: Can an enemy land below Gravesend and come on the back of the batteries on that shore? In times of imminent danger batteries should be judiciously placed to bear upon ships that may be stopped by the boom ; and fireships ready to be employed against them.

From what has been said, it appears that hitherto the principal obstacle to an enemy's coming up the Thames has been the very dangerous and difficult navigation in the approaches to it ; but of late years those dangers and difficulties have been very much lessened since the Queen's Channel has been surveyed and buoyed out.¹ Before that it was supposed to be impracticable for ships, and never used, being totally unknown : but since the survey has been published it is found to be much safer than any other channel ; so much so, that I should not be surprised if a tolerable pilot was to undertake to bring up ships of a moderate draft of water (even if the buoys were removed), without (with a flood tide) much risk as far as the Nore.

History relates that in former Dutch wars, it once happened that the English fleet during a long continued fog, coming into shallow water and being uncertain where they were, anchored ; and when the fog cleared away, they to their very great surprise found themselves very near to the Nore, without knowing by what channel they came there, or how they missed the numerous sands in the way, when they supposed themselves without them all.

¹ It is shown as a buoyed fairway in the *East India Pilot* chart of 1786, which was improved on an earlier one.

*Of Early Preparations and Early Attacking the
Enemy*

Our best dependence must ever be upon an early preparation ; and a judicious disposition of the sea-force, in order to attack the enemy as early as possible after they leave their own ports, and before any of them that may intend to push up the Thames get that length ; or before they can reach any part of the coast where they may intend to land ; keeping a continual fight the whole way to their place of landing or until they are dispersed.

A Disposition Suggested

For this purpose a disposition something like the following one may be imagined to be adopted, till altered or amended on consultation with more able and active sea-officers, when the time arrives that may call for it.

Besides the line-of-battle fleet as before proposed to watch the French line-of-battle, the force to be prepared to oppose the invading army should be composed of smaller ships of the line, and of fifty and forty guns ; and of frigates, sloops, armed ships, armed craft, floating batteries, and gun-boats ; for I can hardly suppose they will be so mad as to send an army over in *detachments* from several *different ports*, without any ships of war to protect them.—Ours to oppose them to be divided into squadrons to different stations, viz. :

One squadron to watch those from St. Malo and adjacent ports . . .	}	When the weather is too bad to keep the sea, to rendezvous at Plymouth or Torbay, or Portland Road.
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One to watch the ports of Cherbourg and Havre .	}	Ditto at St. Helens.
One in Margate Road . . .	}	To guard the ap- proaches to the Thames.
One in the Downs . . .		
One at the Gunfleet . . .		

Each squadron to be commanded by trusty and active able sea-officers, to communicate to each other by signals, by land as well as by vessels at sea, *when they know with certainty of the enemy's transports putting to sea* :—and also to communicate to each other, as often as may be, any material intelligence they may get. Under such regulations the whole may be speedily drawn to any point where the enemy may attempt to make their landing.

Besides these squadrons, some old men-of-war, with their guns on board, to be placed at the Nore and in Sea Reach.

Gunboats, fitted to row or sail, may on many occasions be very useful in the defence or attack of besieged places, or for defending passes in rivers, as they can advance or retreat as circumstances may require ; but I don't think them of use for encountering an enemy at sea.

Of Covering Armies Landing or Embarking

Armed ships of light draft of water are the best for attacking the enemy's transports, either at sea or on the coast ; as well as for any hostile attacks on an enemy's coast by covering troops on landing or embarking. If in the year 1758 two or three such vessels had been laid on the shore at St. Cast, when our troops re-embarked, they would have kept the French army at a distance, and have saved a great many men. If they had been expended in that service, they would have

been well expended, but in all probability they would have been got off; and if not, the boats would have taken their men out.

In the next year at Quebec, General Wolfe proposed to attack the French army entrenched on the Beauport shore at low water, if any vessels could be placed so as to drive them out of two redoubts erected below high-water mark. For this purpose Admiral Sir Charles Saunders ordered two of the transports to be armed with cannon, and to be run on shore at high water as near as possible to the redoubts. The General went on board one of them and placed her himself. This answered all that was expected from them, though the attack did not succeed, the redoubts being (contrary to expectation) within musquet shot of the enemy's line on the cliff behind the redoubts. The grenadiers soon took possession of the redoubts, but were beat out with great loss. When the army retreated, we took the men out of the transports and burnt them.

Present Threats of the French, October, 1793

If the preparations now making in France correspond with the threats and menaces made by the Convention, the time is come that requires the utmost exertion of every individual in every office in the naval line.

There must be great numbers of seamen in the country. The utmost exertions should be used to get them. If the mayors and other magistrates do not back the press warrants, and with the merchants do not give the utmost assistance to the King's officers (but on the contrary withhold the men) in order to man the greatest number possible of frigates and armed ships, they may soon have

cause to repent it, and can only blame themselves (who withhold the men).

It is said a great number of frigates, sloops, and cutters have been unmanned (and remain so) to man the great ships. Might not their officers be employed in tenders and at rendezvouses to raise men, who go more willingly on board frigates than other ships?

Suppose some troops to be kept embarked on board armed transports. Might they not be employed, first, against the enemy's transports and afterwards be landed where they may be most wanted sooner than they could march by land?

A guard at both the Forelands seems very necessary, as well to make appointed signals as to prevent private signals being made from thence by disaffected people to an enemy coming upon the coast. Too much caution cannot be used at such a time.

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Somerset Place. Monday Morning.

I return Lord Spencer the papers, which seem indeed to be wrote by a very intelligent officer, and I feel that sentiment so strong, I should conceive the Government to be truly culpable if every possible means are not adopted to annoy the enemy on their first attempting to land. It is impossible, from the plain observations stated in the paper, but that they must land in great confusion if they come upon any part of the coast unprotected by a naval force. If the erection of small batteries at convenient places will be an additional means of obstructing the landing of an enemy, I do not feel that any respect for

authority, be it ever so great, ought to stand in the way of the measure.

Upon looking over the intelligence sent to me last night by Mr. Nepean, there certainly appears more of preparation and exertion at Dunkirk and other places on that coast than can well be accounted for, and it seems to require particular attention. With the wind as it now is and the preparations at Brest, is not the time arrived when there should be a squadron off Brest or at Scilly? In some of our late treasonable investigations, a plan seems to be afloat of two expeditions, one for the south, the other for the north of Ireland. The last seems a very desperate idea, but not the more improbable. I think we ought to calculate upon the probability that the late transactions in Ireland will be a strong inducement to the French to attempt that country before their friends there are crushed by the exertions making against them.¹

H. D.

ENCLOSURE IN MR. DUNDAS'S LETTER²

As the invasion with which we are at present threatened is supposed to be constructed on a principle run on modern lines, it may not perhaps be thought presumptuous in a sea officer to give his opinion, when it is considered that whatever is connected with the landing of troops, or the

¹ At this time the Government were engaged in very energetic measures for breaking up Lord Edward Fitzgerald's organisation to assist the French when they came. Martial law had been proclaimed and was being put in force with such ruthless severity that Sir Ralph Abercromby resigned his post as commander-in-chief.

² Probably written by Captain Home Popham. See next letter.

defence of a coast, becomes equally the concern of the King's officers, both of the army and navy.

I conclude it will be readily granted, that if the mode of the enemy's attack changes, the nature of the defence must be calculated to resist such changes, although they may differ from the usual established practice.

The general practice in modern times has been to land the invading force on some convenient part of the coast under cover of the fire of such ships of war as were best calculated for the purpose, to form a *depôt* on the coast from which the invading army were to be supplied, and occasionally to retreat to, if they failed in the execution of their plan.

This method of proceeding implies a system admitting of as much regularity as the nature of the operation would admit. The covering ships chose the proper time and the proper anchorage, and availed themselves of every local advantage, and of every circumstance as it might arise at the moment. The troops were regularly embarked in the boats, who waited the most favourable moment to land, conducted by officers to whom such services were familiar, and who were prepared and equal to prevent any confusion that such a service is always exposed to from accidental circumstances. It was seldom, if ever, that more than 2000 or 3000 men could be landed at one time, when the boats returned for a second embarkation.

Without entering further into particulars which would lead to great length, this mode of disembarking troops, with their artillery, ammunition and provisions, was done with as much regularity and order as the nature of such a service would admit.

But in the present case, we are told, that the

enemy are to land themselves on our coast in vessels, from which the whole invading force are to be landed without the cover or assistance of ships of war. I pass over the probability of their escaping the vigilance of our cruisers, which is barely possible, to consider in what state they would be found when arrived near the coast.

From the nature of their passage across the Channel, having sailed from their own coast in the night, from the nature and difference of sailing of the different vessels in which they are embarked, and from the nature of those who conduct them, it is impossible to suppose that any order or regularity could have been kept up in their passage. They must therefore approach our coast with all the disadvantages attending on such a state of irregularity, which will be very much increased by the number of vessels necessary for the embarkation of a force equal to the attempt of an invasion of this country ; nor will these disadvantages be lessened by the apprehensions they must necessarily have in their mind of being annoyed by our cruisers, which will force them to accelerate all their movements, and not to lose a moment in arranging their different vessels, but to endeavour to gain the shore as fast as they possibly can. It will be evident then, that under these circumstances the invasion of our coast will be far different from the landing of troops in the order and regularity of former times.

I know it has been argued in favour of allowing the enemy to land ; that not knowing where they will attempt to land, it will be necessary to defend all accessible places, which implies that our defensive force must be in all places sufficient to repel the enemy, which from the number of landing-places would require more force than we

can afford ; and founded on the same argument, it has been thought hazardous to have guns on the coast for the defence of those landing-places, lest they should fall into the enemy's hands, and be turned against us.

With all the deference due to an opinion, which I know has not been taken up lightly, I will venture to differ in part, as considering that sometimes a principle, just in itself, may be carried to excess so as to become prejudicial if persisted in ; and although every part of the coast may not be proper to be defended and ought not to have artillery exposed to the capture of the enemy, yet there are certainly reasons to assign why such a principle should not always obtain, and where you cannot repel the enemy you ought to resist him.


The exact spot where the enemy may choose to land, I admit, may be doubtful ; but the circumstances of winds, weather and tides at the moment will be indications of such places as are most convenient for such an attempt, and serve in a great measure as a guide where to expect the enemy, and of course to dispose of our strongest defence. For it must be taken into the question that every landing-place will not serve for the disembarking of large bodies of men in the manner it is supposed the enemy mean to attempt, who will want a great extent of beach for their landing, as well as open ground to form upon ; otherwise, if they confine themselves to a narrow space, a small force opposing will have every advantage.

According to the supposed plan the enemy mean to adopt, they must land without any intention of making a *depôt*, and without hope of any communication with the sea ; so that if they do not burn their own vessels themselves, they are sure

it will be quickly done for them. In this case, exposed to be attacked on both sides, in a disadvantageous situation, they have to land at once their provisions, their ammunition and whatever may be necessary for them to accomplish the plan they propose ; a matter of no small difficulty, if they meet any resistance from the shore and are at the same time annoyed from the sea, by the arrival of any of the King's cruisers on the coast.

In preparing to land they will have many difficulties to encounter ; for should the weather be unfavourable, they have no choice ; they must proceed, for they have no retreat. Their general officers, accustomed to extensive commands and to consider war on a large scale, with their minds elated by the *éclat* of continental exploits, will be unused to descend to these minute arrangements that a disembarkation of troops require ; and the other officers, employed on a service totally new to them, and so dissimilar to their usual practice, will be unequal to the giving proper directions on the occasion. They will be sea-sick from the passage ; crowded in their boats, encumbered with the weight of their arms, ammunition and provisions ; in boats and vessels of all sorts and sizes, and of different draughts of water, all crowding to the shore and beating against each other in the surf ; and under all these disadvantages they are to leap into the water and make good their landing.

As this mode of approach naturally implies a scramble, so as evidently the whole must become a general scene of confusion, the troops will land indiscriminately without regard to what corps or to what division they belong, probably with their arms and accoutrements wet with salt water, and



for a time they must remain on the beach in all the disorder of a riotous mob.

In such a situation, I should conceive that resisting an enemy on his landing was highly admissible to military practice, and as all bays have projecting points that serve to flank their curvatures, I should apprehend that large guns, judiciously placed and properly attended, could not but have the most important effect; and should the enemy find strong opposition to their landing and think it prudent to try some other bay, it must be recollected, that whatever tends to distract them gives us a decided advantage, by giving time to our ships to arrive on the coast. As to the guns falling into the enemy's hands, it is to be supposed that they will be spiked in time, and their carriages made useless; and as the business of the enemy is not to remain exposed on the beach, but to push on as fast as possible, it may be presumed they would not wish to be retarded by dragging of heavy guns after them, which must be useless for a time at least, and for whose calibre they have no ammunition provided; besides that, it may be supposed the guns they have in their boats will be more than sufficient and better calculated for their purpose.

In all great military operations, we are to consider the impression it is likely to make on men's minds. If the enemy attempting to invade a rival nation find themselves suffered to land without resistance and to recover and repair all the disadvantages attending on such a situation, it will be attributed and felt by them as arising from the fear of their renown; their minds will become elated, and they will feel themselves equal to the undertaking of any measure of enterprise. All military writers agree that the increasing

spirit is on the side of the assaultants and that an army on the defensive does not quicken in their ideas of success.

It is dangerous to despise an enemy too much, and it is good policy to oppose him whenever it can be done with advantage.

LORD CORNWALLIS TO DUNDAS

Culford. 23rd January, 1798.

Sir,—I return the letter and proposition of Captain Popham which you transmitted to me, and which I think by no means unworthy of attention.

It is very advisable in the present situation of affairs to avail ourselves of the services of an useful and able body of men, and in those places where it has not been thought necessary to erect batteries, their aid may be required for other purposes, either afloat or on shore. But as the adoption of this plan over the whole coast of Britain would be attended with a very considerable expense, I should recommend that a trial of it should be made on the coasts of Sussex, Kent, and Essex, and it might be afterwards extended, according to circumstances, to such parts of the coast as might appear to stand most in need of that assistance.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient and

faithful servant,

CORNWALLIS.

Right Hon. Henry Dundas, &c., &c., &c.

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Wimbledon. 31st January, 1798.

PRIVATE.

My dear Lord,—I suppose your lordship is not in the habit of any communication with Sir Charles Middleton which makes him write his ideas to me, but that is no reason why I should not *privately* communicate to [you] the copy of a *private* letter I yesterday received from him, and I remain, my dear Lord,

Yours very sincerely,

HENRY DUNDAS.

ENCLOSURE

Sir Charles Middleton to Dundas

PRIVATE.

Felton. 28th January, 1798.

Dear Sir,—I perceive by the King's message, as well as by the public prints, that the French are serious in their preparations to invade us. You will therefore, I am sure, excuse me if I think it right to throw out a few hints on the subject.

You will probably meet with many sea officers who may make light of our enemy's threats, and because the means which they have proposed to adopt have never come within the line of their experience, they will roundly pronounce them impracticable.

But the truth is, there are very few things impracticable to active minds with sound judgments, and if the French will venture to sacrifice 50,000 men, of which there cannot be much doubt considering what has already passed, I see no

insuperable difficulties in landing 30,000. It is therefore much better and safer to suppose the attempt possible, and to be quickened into endeavours to guard against it, than to slumber over the idea of any supposed impracticability.

Under this impression I would suggest, that if the preparations for invasion are making between the Texel and Brest, it will be prudent and necessary to keep our frigates and smaller vessels within that compass, and to anchor as many of them as occasion may require, as nearly as may be with safety to the enemy's ports. If rafts are intended it will probably be between Dunkirk and Dungeness, where the narrowness of the Channel and the flatness of the coast are inviting.

Such floats may be made invulnerable to ships of war in the common way of attack, and prove extremely dangerous from the number of men and horses which they will be made to contain. But if our frigates and small craft as well as collier-built transports are fitted for mortars and howitzers, with large carronades and *shell* shot, their effects amongst men and horses will be terrible. Combustibles, too, for setting transports on fire, without awaiting to take possession of them, and small fire-ships may be made extremely useful.

If the floats are made as large and with the defence against shipping which I suppose practicable, their attempt will probably be made in the midst of summer with a southerly wind. In this case, if our ships are kept on our own side of the Channel, it will be a lee shore when the enemy appears on it, and in that case we should be left without *room* and without *time* to act offensively.

If these frigates and smaller craft were divided into squadrons, under the direction of active experienced officers with distinguishing flags or pennants, it would give additional energy and usefulness to their operation and effect.

The commanding officers of the different districts of such squadrons, having their headquarters at Plymouth, Portsmouth and the Downs, ought to be of the best repute in the service for experience, judgment and activity of mind. They should have under their command as many of the smaller line-of-battle ships as can be spared from watching the enemy's fleets, with a few frigates and smaller craft, who should be ready to put to sea at a moment's notice if exigency required it.

The port admirals should be men of arrangement, firm in their conduct, and active in equipments. This is no time for *punctilio* ; small objects must give way to greater when the country is in danger. There are many excellent officers unemployed who are zealous for service ; all may be made useful.

When I came to the Admiralty, that absurd business of guarding the Thames by floating batteries and lighters seemed to be a favourite object. Money and labour should not be thrown away in that quarter, for so long as we are masters of the sea and Trinity House have possession of the buoys, the enemy cannot get within them.

Where you have no fleet to contend with our's, *two-thirds of the marines* if necessary may safely be landed from all the line-of-battle ships. If the sea officers should grumble on such occasions they must not be minded.

As the ocean will be open to the enemy's privateers, while our frigates are confined to the

Channel, no ships should be permitted to sail without convoy during that time.

Great care likewise should be taken so to station the Irish squadrons as to counteract the enemy's endeavours in this and other respects.

I do not wish to give you the trouble to acknowledge this paper, as I may have occasion to transmit some further hints, when the enemy's views and means of executing them shall become more apparent. In the meantime I remain with much regard and esteem,

Dear Sir,

Yours [&c.],

CHARLES MIDDLETON.

P.S.—Attention to refitments, and keeping officers to their duty on the present important occasion is of the first consequence. If your cruising squadrons are kept too long at sea they will be the longer in refitting, and frequent reliefs are best, but this will require knowledge as well as constant attention. The arrangement of the fleet and keeping it in order for immediate service, and making the most of your powers, civil and military, requires the first abilities, both natural and professional. The preparations at Brest are not in the first instance against this country ; but if you are not armed at all points, and especially at sea, what are called feints may be turned into serious attacks. I take it for granted we have a body of line-of-battle ships ready to act within the Channel if required. Havre de Grace is a good station for ships to anchor in, and also Gravelines Pits. No officers, great or small, should be from their ships at this time. They are all necessary at the ports.

ANONYMOUS MEMORANDUM¹

Lord Duncan's victory shews that a great number of frigates are not necessary to ensure success in a sea action, provided the enemy do not considerably exceed us in number.

I mention this because I think it probable that the enemy will risk the destruction of their own fleet in order to employ ours while they make good their landing. In this case our frigates must not be unnecessarily attached to the Channel Fleet, but be kept on the enemy's coast and our own to prevent a landing; and as they may be greatly exceeded in number by the transports and not have it in their power to destroy the whole, vessels of every bulk or size may be usefully employed in obstructing them, so as to allow time for the frigates, after they have destroyed one set, to overtake the others before a landing is effected.

St. Malo Bay, as well as Moundegrez and Caen Roads, are very safe for laying at single anchor during the summer. It fell to my share to be very much employed there in a former war, for the destruction of their flat-bottom boats at Caen. They would have been all burnt under my direction but for an accident not in our power to prevent. We had seized the batteries on each side of the harbour, but an alarm had set the military in motion, and daylight obliged us to withdraw.²

¹ Possibly by Palliser, whose previous memorandum it quotes in places *verbatim*.

² Commodore Howe and the Duke of Marlborough threatened and intended to land here in 1758, but no such operation as that mentioned is recorded. It is possible, however, that it occurred the following year when Rodney was sent with a light squadron to destroy the flat-boats at Havre. Another possibility is that it occurred in 1746 when Boscawen had a defence flotilla in this region, in which Palliser commanded the sloop Weasel.

You must expect many feints before the principal attack takes place. Everything under Providence depends on a proper arrangement of your ships and of communicating speedy information of the enemy's movements.

Keeping our frigates on the enemy's coast is the best station for information and defeating their views. The interval between their coast and ours may be usefully occupied by smaller vessels.

Activity at the ports in fitting the fleet, and keeping the ships ready for sea, are duties of great importance; much more so than is generally considered. The subject is a very comprehensive one. But detail is necessary to ensure success.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRACTICABILITY OF THE FRENCH INVADING ENGLAND

To invade this country will require a large body of men to be landed together and where they will find immediate subsistence; their number might be considerably more than the army prepared to oppose their landing.

In considering how far it is in the power of France to invade us, and supposing they should attempt it with an army of 30,000 men:—It may be observed that the necessary number of ships and craft to transport such an army cannot be collected into any one port of their coast nearest and opposite to ours, and if they set out from the ports on that part of their coast they must come in such craft only as those ports will admit (which are indeed the properest for an immediate landing). Of such vessels let us consider, how many have they, or how many will those ports contain, say above 500, which may one with another carry fifty men each?

Many of them will necessarily be empresse^d for baggage, camp equipage, provisions, &c., &c.

Whatever may be the whole number of men they intend to land, they cannot all sail from any one of those ports.

Estimated 400 [*sic*]

50

20,000

In the year 1745 it is said they had collected at Boulogne 180 of those vessels, in which 9000 men were destined to embark, and 3000 more at Calais in sixty vessels ; with these vessels those two ports were quite full.

Dunkirk, Havre, Cherbourg, Granville, St. Malo, Morlaix, Brest.—Suppose all the vessels at any one port to get out in one tide, which is not probable to happen, seeing they are all dry harbours, much less can it be supposed that the whole at all the harbours can ever come out on the same tide. It would still be more uncertain (even if they should not meet any opposition from an enemy by the way) whether those from the several ports could fetch the place of their destination so as for them to land together ; and if they do meet an enemy, such of them as are not destroyed must be dispersed, for they can make but little resistance whilst on the water in such craft, crowded with soldiers ; if they come in larger vessels from other ports, as from Dunkirk, Havre, Brest, they must be accompanied by a naval force to cover their descent, for they cannot run those vessels on shore and disembark from them immediately.

Suppose a part of them to set out from Havre and Dunkirk in larger vessels, say of 250 tons and downwards, a number of such vessels containing

say 5000 men at each place will scarce get out in one tide, and it is doubtful whether such vessels can come out of those havens on the neap tides, but this may be known with certainty. If those at Havre come out into the road they will be exposed to attacks, without they have a strong fleet to cover them.

A general notion prevails that it is very practicable for an army to be run over from Calais and Boulogne in spite of this opinion. It is said, suppose a hard gale of wind at S.W. forces our cruisers from their station into the Downs, that whilst they are there the enemy may come over and land.

To this it may be answered, when it blows so hard that our cruisers cannot keep their station, the weather will be too bad for their craft to come over with troops, and after the weather moderates, the same time as will be necessary for them to embark and get out of port will be more than sufficient for the cruisers to return to their stations.

But suppose they should come over with a hard S.W. wind, where could they fetch to be able to land except they run through the Downs?

It is not likely their seamen would advise making the attempt under those circumstances.

Any body of men that may embark at Dunkirk, Calais, Boulogne, Dieppe, and Havre without they have a sea force with them superior to those who are to oppose them, must be destroyed or dispersed, so as to prevent their landing at the place intended, or at any place in a considerable body together.

Nevertheless, too much dependence should not be laid on this reasoning, nor our hopes to rest upon any blunders the enemy may make; for we cannot be too much on our guard against such an

attempt on such occasion. It is to be hoped we shall always be unanimous when the general welfare is at stake, for the French can have no hopes of prevailing but under favour of rebellion and disunion amongst ourselves.

OF ATTEMPTING AN INVASION IN WINTER

If the French should be so daring as to intend invading England in winter, it may be called a desperate attempt indeed ; but as in war events are always uncertain, so in desperate attempts there is a possibility of some unforeseen circumstances happening to favour them : and it may be proper to be apprised of some that may be expected, in order to be prepared against them as much as possible.

They may perhaps reckon that their making of the attempt will occasion insurrections in the country, and may perhaps depend on the favourable disposition of the people to receive them at some place where they mean to land ; or they may depend upon long dark nights and short days to favour their passage by sea, and thus to escape the vigilance of our squadrons appointed to watch their respective ports from whence they may be expected to send their transports with troops ; and likewise upon the chance of frequent gales of wind blowing our squadrons off their stations, together with the hope of our grand fleet being dispersed and disabled by bad weather if they are constantly kept at sea during the winter : All which it is probable may happen, and they may slip over under protection of their whole naval force from Brest, before our fleet can be collected together again and refitted.

The advantage of long nights, &c., cannot be

prevented but by a judicious disposition of our naval force ; and the great vigilance and activity of our squadrons may make it almost impossible for an enemy to get over to our coast ; especially from such of their ports as are tide harbours.

It may be supposed that whenever any of them may land their first object will be to take immediate possession of the nearest town and seaport, as well for their immediate shelter and subsistence as for a security to their transports to disembark their baggage, artillery, stores, provisions, &c.

This they must also do, if they intend only to land and plunder some seaport town, burn the shipping, &c., and then return.

But [for them] to succeed in any case, our navy must be very negligent indeed.

According to present appearances, if they make the attempt this winter, I should expect they will form their principal embarkation at Brest, by collecting a great number of merchant ships there for transports from the ports in the Bay, viz., Port L'Orient, Nantes, Rochelle, Rochefort, and principally from Bordeaux. Brest I suppose to be the principal port of rendezvous for the invading army, and for collecting their ships to sail with the strongest squadron of ships-of-war they can possibly equip, with a determination to hazard a battle with our fleet, and whatever the issue may be, to push their troops on shore during the battle ; and at the same time, or as nearly at the same time as possible, to hasten out with the greatest dispatch all the troops they possibly can from the several ports within the Channel, viz., St. Malo, Granville, Cherbourg, Havre, Dieppe, Boulogne, Calais and Dunkirk.

I suppose these detached bodies (some of which may be considerable) to have several places

assigned to them for landing ; and on being prevented by adverse winds or by our ships from disembarking at the particular places allotted to them, to attempt it at such other places as they can reach ; thus to alarm the whole coast at once, and divide our forces on the shore, trusting that some of them will make good a landing and maintain their ground.

An invading army coming over in transports and fishing shallops cannot disembark (especially in winter) except in some safe anchoring place, or in some harbour ; as well for conveniently landing, and for immediate shelter for their men, as for the safety of their ships. Let us consider what roadsteads and ports there are in the Channel between the Lizard and the Thames.

Roads or landing places.	Adjacent seaports and towns.
In the neighbour- hood of Falmouth	
Mevagissey Bay .	Falmouth and Fowey.
Cawsand Bay .	. Plymouth.
Start Bay .	. { Dartmouth, town and harbour.
Torbay .	. { Dartmouth, Tinmouth har- bour and Exmouth.
Portland Road and	Weymouth harbour.
Studley Bay .	. Portland and Pool.
St. Helens Road .	. Isle of Wight and Spithead.
Within the rivers	. Chichester.
Brighthelmstone	. { Brighton, Shoreham, Seaford and Newhaven.
Eastbourne .	. Lewes and Hastings.
Under Dungeness .	. Rye, Hythe and Folkestone.
Dover Road .	. Dover.
Downs .	. Deal, Sandwich, Ramsgate.
Margate Road	. { Margate, Feversham, Canter- bury.

On the coast of Essex are several anchoring places and creeks fit for transports within the sands and the Thames.

Ouzley Bay . . . Adjacent ports and towns are Colchester, Harwich, Ipswich, Woodbridge, &c., &c.

It is very material to get good intelligence of the number and kinds of shipping in their respective ports, how they are fitted, victualled, &c. ; by which a good judgment may be formed of their intentions ; at least it may help to confirm or confute intelligence received from different quarters.

From the severity of the French Government, I suppose it may be difficult to get early and good intelligence ; therefore all neutral vessels coming from their ports should be strictly examined respecting the number of ships, preparations, &c., in the ports they come from. Prisoners, deserters, or emigrants should also be examined ; and some intelligence gained this way may help to explain others acquired by different channels.

I should expect that such of their transports as are large merchant ships will be armed to a degree, that is, as they are generally armed in war ; and many of them, especially those from St. Malo, Nantes and Bordeaux, are capable of being armed with twenty or twenty-four guns.

Their India Company's ships at Port L'Orient, employed as transports, will carry a great number of soldiers for a short voyage, and be of equal force to our frigates.

Perhaps it might not be amiss if the magistrates of all seaport towns were to be directed to cause all the guns belonging to the shipping in their respective ports to be mounted on their carriages

and made fit and ready for service, either of arming ships, or quickly mounted on platforms for batteries to defend their ports or landing-places in the vicinity of their towns, with a provision of all proper implements and ammunition, such as powder, ball, cartridges, &c. ; the seamen and townsmen of the place to be occasionally employed at those batteries.

Query: Are the four ships and men that were sent from Toulon at liberty to be employed ? If yea, they may be armed or employed as transports.

A very watchful eye should be kept on embarkations made at Brest or in the ports of the Bay, that they do not slip away to Ireland.

No invasion, formerly threatened, was so much to be apprehended as the present ; therefore we ought not barely to keep an equal fleet-of-the-line at home, but a considerable superiority, that in case of a defeat or disaster happening we may be able to face them again immediately. One total defeat at sea may at this critical time prove fatal to England, though several defeats of the French will not put France into any danger.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF DEFENCE

Although every part of the coast ought to be defended to the utmost extent of our means of defence, yet more particular attention should be paid to those parts which, from their vicinity to the enemy's coast, are most exposed to the possibility of being surprised ; and to those which, if the enemy should effect a landing, would admit of his having the most easy and expeditious communication with London or either of the dockyards.

It would very much assist the arrangements to be made at sea for the defence of the coast,

if we have information from the army of the country near those parts of the coast which admit of an enemy landing, that we might know what parts we should be most solicitous to protect, if more parts should be attacked at the same time than we should have squadrons to defend ; for less attention might be shewn to those shores from which, after having made good his landing, an enemy would find difficulty in advancing into the country, than to those from which, though the landing itself should be more difficult, he might advance with rapidity and ease.

In all our arrangements, attention should be had to the nature of the enemy's preparations. If they are fitting only large boats, or small vessels of light draught of water, their descent must be intended to be made on some part of our coast near to the port from which the armament is to sail. If ships or large vessels are fitting to carry troops, they will probably be intended for attempts on more distant parts. The former armament may be sent to open and exposed beaches on which the boats may be run and the troops landed as soon as they get to them ; but the latter will probably be sent to places where the vessels will find some sort of shelter, as the disembarking of troops, artillery, horses, &c., in the open sea, or in any exposed situation, must always be attended with uncertainty, difficulty and danger. While only small vessels are preparing to attack us, the greatest part of our force may be drawn towards those parts against which such an armament may be sent ; and our force must become more extended as the enemy's preparations gives us reason to expect more extensive attacks.

On those parts of the coast where the extent of beach is so great as to make it probable that an

enemy might land on one part before a squadron could move from another to prevent it, it will be necessary to keep a permanent force in various stations, which may at least retard the operations of the enemy, and by that means give our ships more time to get up before the landing is completed.

Flying Squadrons

To the squadrons fitting for the purpose of defending our coast, or attacking that of the enemy, mortar boats should be added, which on many occasions may be more useful than the bomb vessels.

In calms or very light winds they may, by the help of oars, be more easily placed in the situations in which they are to act, and in case of danger more easily removed from it.

By being lower and smaller they may be placed in the night with better hope of being unobserved, for which fore and aft sails would also be useful.

By being smaller objects they would be less liable to be struck by shot. A bomb vessel might be driven from her anchorage by gunboats, which would have an advantage over them.

For the above reasons, and on account of their lighter draught of water, they might lie nearer to the shore than the bomb vessels, which, in attacking the enemy's coast, would enable them to throw their shells further into the towns or harbours; and in defending our coast, to lie more under the protection of batteries on shore.

In addition to their throwing shells they may also be used as gunboats.

Each of these squadrons should have a number of fire vessels attached to it, some of them large

enough to destroy frigates, others of small draught of water, to be sent as opportunity may offer into the enemy's ports.

Isle of Wight

Although the French being in possession of the Isle of Wight would not enable them to march to London, nor, perhaps, to make any movement with the army landed on it toward conquering the Kingdom, yet it would be attended with many great advantages to them, and many very serious mischiefs to us. The disgrace that would attend it would alone be sufficient to make it necessary for us to dislodge them, which we should have to attempt under great disadvantages. We must collect an army stronger than that of the enemy ; we should have the difficulty to encounter of making a landing good in the face of an army which would have taken every possible precaution to prevent it ; were they once in possession they would certainly exert themselves to the utmost to send over artillery and troops, and the island, which has now scarcely a gun or a soldier, would then be crowded with both, and every inhabitant would be compelled to assist in erecting batteries on every beach and on every defensible port in the island.

If the French were in possession of the Isle of Wight, our convoys from abroad would be exposed to imminent danger, our coasting trade interrupted, and the trade to London almost destroyed, for privateers, row-boats and all sorts of armed vessels, being sure of protection on both sides of the channel, would be innumerable. This would require us to employ a great number of cruisers near the island, to do which we must lessen

our means of protection on other parts of the coast ; and from what part of the coast is it that we have any force to spare ?

The passage of the Needles and Road of St. Helens would be lost to us, and the passage to and from Spithead would become difficult and dangerous, and our fleet could not ride at Spithead without being constantly exposed to the shot of their gunboats which might lie on the shoals, or go up toward Spithead in the night and fire at our ships with little risk to themselves, as they might retire under the guns of their batteries on the island on the first appearance of an attack. Fire-ships also might be sent down with a strong lee tide, the crews of which being so near their own shore would have little to apprehend.

All attempts at landing on other parts of the coast must have some co-operation with each other, but any one should be prevented by a great accumulation of force being opposed to it ; but as no reinforcements can be sent to the force on the island without the loss of much time in transporting it, an attack unsupported by and unconnected with any other may be made, and the island when conquered converted into a place of arms whence succours may be sent to armies employed on other parts of the coast.

Who can say what effect may be produced on the minds of the people by the French remaining for any time in possession of the island ?

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Wimbledon. 9th February, 1798.

My Lord,—About two months ago I troubled your lordship with a paper containing suggestions

for defending our own coasts and annoying those of the enemy by means of separate cruising squadrons acting in conjunction with small bodies of land force ready at all times, to co-operate with those squadrons.¹ I stated the grounds on which those suggestions appeared to me to merit attention, and I took the liberty, at the same time, to enumerate such places on the enemy's coast as, according to the best information I had been able to collect, afforded any reasonable grounds to hope might be annoyed with success. How far I am right in the particular enumeration I then gave of assailable places, I cannot take upon me to assert with any degree of positiveness. I offered the suggestions founded on such memoranda as I had from time to time collected, and your lordship has undoubtedly a multitude of the best channels of information to enable you to check and correct any erroneous suggestions of mine.

As to the general outlines, however, of the system brought forward in that paper, I feel myself, upon the best consideration I can give to it, fortified in the strongest degree by mature attention to the relative circumstances of the two countries, and it gives me much satisfaction to understand that the naval part of those suggestions do in general concur with the opinions which your lordship has formed with the advice and under the authority of our highest naval characters.

From the very splendid state in which the British Navy now is, there is not, I flatter myself, any difficulty in the Board of Admiralty furnishing such small squadrons as may be necessary, without in any degree impairing the powerful efforts of the Channel Fleet, if the enemy shall be able, by any exertion, to send forth a fleet to protect the hostile

¹ See *ante*, p. 233.

armaments destined to land in Great Britain and Ireland. I am, however, impressed with a strong conviction that at least so far as concerns Great Britain the attempts will be made in separate armaments acting in concert together, so far as winds and weather will permit, and endeavouring to distract the attention of this country by various attacks made at the same time. It is from this conviction I am so strongly impressed with the expediency of fitting out those separate and independent cruising squadrons, and upon the same principle it is that I feel the necessity of not trusting to any one or two large bodies of land forces collected together, but to make each separate district of the coast as strong as possible.

Consistently with this view, and in the present exhausted state of our army, it is certainly not easy to collect a force speedily to compose those separate brigades of troops to act in co-operation with the cruising squadrons in question ; but from the means which have been taken, and the measure of recruiting from the supplemental militia, which I have every reason to hope will prove successful, I am sanguine in my hopes that some of the brigades may be immediately formed,¹ and that

¹ In January, 1798, had been passed the first Act authorising the commander-in-chief to enlist men from the militia up to 10,000 men. Except in Norfolk, the device was a failure owing to the obstruction of the Lord-Lieutenants. See Dundas to Grenville, *Dropmore Papers* (*Hist. MSS. Com.*), iv. 224, and Fortescue, *British Army*, IV. ii. p. 639. At the same time, by the establishment of the Supplementary Militia, the force was increased from 42,000 to 100,000. *Ibid.*, p. 888. But the Act was repealed in July. In 1798 the Home establishment of regulars was 48,600, and in Ireland 40,000. *Ibid.*, p. 939. The actual number of all arms in England, Wales, and the Channel Islands in April was 35,509, of whom 14,327 were cavalry. See return quoted by Desbrière, *Projets*, ii. p. 3. The 'Army of England' intended for the invasion never much exceeded 50,000 men.

progressively within a few months a body of troops, from ten to fifteen thousand men, may be appropriated to this service : and the necessary directions have been given for preparing such an assortment of armed transports as may be requisite for accommodating the troops in such stations as require such an arrangement.

It therefore only now remains for me to state to your lordship the stations in which I think it most expedient that the troops should be placed, in order that your lordship may consider how far they are such as may suit the convenience and safety of the ships and transports to be appropriated to the same service.

Downs

The first station I mention is the Downs, and the troops can with ease be accommodated at Deal and its neighbourhood. I suppose there will of course at all times be stationed in the Downs a naval force which could act with the troops if any favourable opportunity should offer. I should think it, however, improper to be at the expense of an appropriate assortment of transports to be stationed at the Downs ; because one of the chief objects of the squadron stationed there would probably be to keep in alarm the coasts of Holland and Flanders, including Dunkirk ; and I am not aware that there is any such prospect of making an impression by land with any small body of troops as would justify the expense of keeping an arrangement of transports stationed there. It is likewise a bad place for the embarkation of troops on many occasions when the wind blows fresh. At the same time it is certainly true, that if these objections did not occur, it might be very eligible to have the

power of speedily sending off a body of troops on the back of an enemy if they should be successful in running over in the course of the night a small predatory armament to any narrow part of the Channel between the Downs and the Isle of Wight, and at a moment when the squadron at the Isle of Wight might be obstructed by an adverse wind from bringing speedily to that point the troops stationed in the Isle of Wight. To such a case we must trust to the ships of war or the shipping which Deal may afford for a short run of that kind.

Isle of Wight

The second station I mention is the Isle of Wight, where there should be always a body of troops ready to embark in transports stationed there for the purpose of acting in co-operation with a cruising squadron, whose object ought to be to guard our own coast, and annoy those of the enemy, in the space of the Channel between Calais and Cherbourg.

Portland and Falmouth

Two squadrons, with an appropriate body of troops and transports to each, should be stationed at Portland and Falmouth, for the purpose of protection and annoyance between Cherbourg and the mouth of the Channel.

Barnstaple or Bideford¹ Bay

A fifth station for troops and transports, I would propose to be at Barnstaple or Bideford¹ Bay, or, if these places are not proper, at any point

¹ MS. 'Bedford.'

between them and St. Ives. In this proposal I have a two-fold object, viz., the protection of our own coast on both sides of the Bristol Channel, and the affording a speedy aid to the coast of Ireland if an attempt is made there. I do not think it necessary to propose that there should be a separate cruising squadron appropriated to this service, because I take it for granted a powerful squadron will always be employed in the neighbourhood of the Scilly Islands, from whence the commanding officer could be instructed, according to the intelligence he should receive, to detach a small force to convoy the transports and troops to any point where their service would be most requisite.

Yarmouth

Yarmouth is another station I have considered to be material in order to facilitate giving an immediate aid to the north-east of England or Scotland in the event of any attempts being made on any vulnerable parts on any of those northern coasts. Upon this point, however, I am very diffident for several reasons. In the first place I understand it is very difficult to embark troops or to get them speedily out from Yarmouth. Secondly, I imagine no attempt can be made upon those quarters without a considerable naval protection to escort it, and such an expedition can scarcely be attempted without falling a sacrifice either to the fleet cruising off the Texel and other ports of Holland, or to the fleet stationed at Yarmouth. Lastly, a small body of troops may not be essential to the safety of the only great temptation to the northward of Yarmouth, *Newcastle* or the *Firth of Forth*, as, in both those places

care ought to be taken to station such a permanent force as to defy any attempt, except one of such magnitude as to require the protection of a fleet adequate to contend with our force in the North Seas, of which there does not at present appear any such probability as to create alarm or require much auxiliary precaution.

Port Patrick

There is however another station which I think is very material to occupy with a body of troops, chiefly with a view to the security of Ireland. I mean *Port Patrick*. With a view to the protection of the west or south-west coasts of Scotland, a more commodious station might certainly be chosen, but any risk to them is so very inconsiderable compared with that of Ireland, that I cannot hesitate advising the brigade of troops to be stationed at a point nearest opposite to Ireland, and from which they could, in the course of one or two tides, be carried over to the neighbourhood of Belfast. My reason for this suggestion is not so much from an apprehension that a hostile attempt on Ireland will be made in that quarter ; but that it would be of the most essential consequence to the security of Ireland, if, at the same time that a landing took place in the south, an additional body of troops should land in the north to aid the civil and military force stationed there in keeping down all attempts to insurrection or other co-operation with the enemy, by means of the disaffected in the north of Ireland. Neither a regular squadron, nor an appropriation of transports is necessary for this station, except that probably it might be prudent for the admiralty to order some sloop or other armed vessel to cruise

there for the purpose of preventing any attempts to annoy the packets with the troops in passing between Port Patrick and Donaghan.

It does not occur that it is necessary for me to trouble your lordship more at length at present. I thought it my duty at this period of the business to lay my ideas before you, in order that you may have them in view in framing your general arrangements, and, at the same time, enable you to renew with me the discussion of any points of detail which it may be necessary to concert between us. I shall be ready at all times when it suits your convenience.

I have the honour to be [&c.],

HENRY DUNDAS.

MEMORANDUM BY GENERAL SIR CHARLES GREY¹

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answers</i>
Stationary squadrons with troops on board.	A most excellent plan either for the purpose of offence or support and will render it difficult for an enemy to approach the English coast.
The Downs.	A large fleet of frigates and armed vessels for cruisers should always be stationed here.

¹ This paper is endorsed 'Sir Chas. Grey's Plan of Naval Defence.' Questions on the points in the left-hand column had apparently been submitted to him, and his answers are in the right-hand column.

Questions

Whitstable and
Herne Bays.

Answers

which would render any advance from Dunkirk, Ostend, Flushing, &c., almost impossible ; and should the enemy escape the vigilance of this numerous fleet and cruisers, the same wind in that case which enables the enemy to go down Channel is favourable for our fleet from the Downs to overtake and demolish them should they attempt to land at Rye Harbour, Hastings, Bexhill, Pevensey Level, &c., &c.

The best defence for this approach is, as I have always said, a heavy floating battery—one of the Dutch ships moored at the mouth of the East Swale with a heavy gunboat on each side would answer this purpose. Gunboats should also be stationed in the Swale and Medway Rivers for the defence of Sheerness and Arsenal and to prevent the landing at Whitstable. Herne Bay is too dis-

*Questions**Answers*

Force in the Isle of Thanet.

Sea fencibles.

tant to be defended by these floating defences in the Swale, therefore a proper disposition will be made on the heights to defend this bay, which is the only bay an enemy can land at with certainty, all the other part of the coast from Reculver, in the Isle of Thanet, to Whitstable is very difficult indeed, being full of sandbanks.

Most desirable with transports for the purpose of embarking the troops, to convey them for defence or support to any part of the coast.

Most certainly right to take the advantage of so able and hardy a race of men, as the smugglers and fishermen are to be enrolled and commanded by naval officers, and to serve afloat or on shore as circumstances require, but the whole to be under the command of the general commanding the southern district or

Questions

Answers

whom he shall appoint at particular stations.

Respecting more heavy cannon for batteries on the beaches, as proposed by Captain Popham—There are too many heavy cannon already.

Barham Court.¹ 1st March, 1798.

*IDEAS FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE CHANNEL*²

(Draft of Paper with Covering Letter circulated by Lord Spencer to the Cabinet)

15th February, 1798.

Sir,—Herewith you will receive the outline of my ideas for the naval defence of the country this season, sketched out in conformity to the suggestions which you have communicated to me in your letter of the 9th instant; and if they are such as you approve I shall be obliged to you to put them in circulation. You will easily perceive that this paper is rather a rough sketch of the subject than a detailed plan, but it may serve to give a general view of what has suggested itself to me upon it, and if approved, the detailed parts of it may be carried into execution in conformity to it.

There is one part of this subject which, in

¹ Barham Court, near Canterbury, was the headquarters of the Southern District, which Sir Charles Grey commanded.

² In a later memorandum sent to Pitt, 4th April (*post*, p. 302), Lord Spencer says he founded this paper on suggestions in Dundas's memorandum (*ante*, pp. 233 and 285).

considering the particular nature of the operations to which our views are directed, has unavoidably pressed itself on my mind in such a manner that I cannot feel satisfied without again mentioning it to you, being persuaded that the prompt and effectual execution of all our plans is very materially concerned in it. What I allude to is the mode of conveying our troops from one station to another, and transporting them on any expedition whether near home or at a distance. In former wars I believe it was very frequently the practice to convey them on board of men-of-war, and both in point of expedition and security it is unquestionably the best method. If this practice could on the present occasion be resorted to, it would have all the advantages which can be looked for on occasions of this kind, and give the greatest facility to any of the movements which circumstances may require us to make; but unfortunately the doubt which has within a few years been raised on the question, whether troops embarked on board a man-of-war are subject to naval discipline or not, has excited such jealousies and uneasiness in both the sea and land service that it appears to me absolutely impossible to risk the agitation of the subject; and we shall in consequence be under the necessity of contracting for the manning of the ships appropriated for transports, the expense of which will be very heavy, and the circumstances of keeping so considerable a body of men lying almost idle alongside our ships of war, at a rate of pay more than double of what the seaman in the Royal Navy receive, will be obviously liable to many and serious objections.¹

These objections indeed are so strong, that I

¹ Fourteen old men-of-war were eventually fitted out as 'troop-ships' armed *en flûte*—viz.: seven 64's (including four Dutch prizes), two 50's and five frigates. For a list of them see Schomberg, iv. 598.

should almost have been tempted to avoid them by putting all the transports in commission, and taking the chance of consequences, if I had not recollected what happened on this subject just before the sailing of the expedition under Sir Hugh Christian to the West Indies, which I am persuaded you will also remember, when the troops being actually embarked this question was started; and though after some discussion an expedient was adopted which we hoped would have served as a compromise and have settled the dispute, so strong a representation came up against it, signed by all the admirals then at Portsmouth (most of whom were not concerned in the expedition), that we were obliged to annul the order which had been issued, and trust to the temper and rightheadedness of the sea and land commanders of that expedition for the prevention of any further mischief upon it, which (as you know) notwithstanding the extreme moderation and good sense they displayed, was however not entirely prevented.¹

I have recalled the circumstances to your recollection with a view to justify the opinion which I have already given, and now again repeat on the fullest consideration, that, unless it shall be clearly and distinctly understood that all troops

¹ See vol. i. pp. 135-7, 191-229. Details of the origin of the dispute are given in Colonel Wyndham Quin's *Memoirs of Sir Charles Tyler*, ch. iii. A private of the 11th Regiment, then serving as marines in the Mediterranean Fleet, had refused to obey the master-at-arms in the Diadem. After inquiry into the case, Capt. Tyler ordered the man to be confined, and Lieutenant Fitzgerald of the regiment publicly accused him of having acted with great injustice. For these words, which were subsequently repeated in cold blood, Fitzgerald was brought before a naval court-martial composed of four admirals, Goodall, Hyde Parker, Linzee and Man, and two captains, Holloway and Nelson. Though Fitzgerald protested against the jurisdiction of the Court, he was found guilty and sentenced to be dismissed the service.

or other persons embarked on board a commissioned man-of-war are under the discipline of the navy, it will be highly improper to suffer any to be so embarked ; and having assumed this, I cannot help very urgently representing the great inconvenience, and perhaps beyond, that may arise from the manner in which these troopships, which will for the whole summer be stationed with our men-of-war, must necessarily be manned ; setting aside the enormous increase of expense to the public, and the loss of the opportunity which otherwise may be had of occasionally employing them in short cruises in the neighbourhood of their stations, to which service, as armed transports, they will be inapplicable.

I am well aware that the subject I have here dwelt upon is viewed by the officers of the army with as much jealousy as it is by the officers of the navy ; and it may perhaps be imagined that my official habits have led me to lean too much to the opinions of the latter. I am not however aware that I do so, and taking into consideration all the very peculiar circumstances attending the discipline of a man-of-war, and the absolute necessity of investing her commander with a power adequate to the great responsibility of his situation, I think any impartial person must be decidedly of opinion with me that the doubtful footing on which this matter now stands is a very important defect in the system of our military jurisprudence ; and one which cannot fail to operate as a clog and impediment to every conjunct expedition which we may find it necessary to undertake.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your very obedient humble servant,

SPENCER.

15th February, 1798.

*Ideas for the Channel the ensuing Season*Admiralty. 6th February, 1798.¹

A squadron as specified in the margin to be stationed at each of the three following places as their principal rendezvous, viz: The Downs, St. Helens and Portland Road; to be under admiralty orders; and to be kept in constant readiness to co-operate with the three divisions of land forces proposed to be stationed in the neighbourhood of each of the above anchorages.²

To be instructed occasionally to stretch over to the French coast (according to the information which may be received) for the purpose of observing what is going on there; or when it is not judged advisable for the whole squadron to move together, to detach from time to time a ship with frigates and sloops on that service, taking as much care as possible in either case that they be not driven too far from the part of the Channel allotted to

¹ There is another almost identical draft of this paper dated 30th January.

² *Marginal note:*

	L. of B.	50's.	Frig.	Slps.	Bbs.
Downs, under the command of [blank]	0	2	2	3	2
St. Helens, under the command of Admiral Colpoys	2	1	2	2	8
Portland Road, under the command of Sir J. Warren	2	0	2	2	2

N.B.—Each squadron to have as many cutters or luggers as may be convenient to attach to it.

It is proposed to have three divisions of gunboats, one at the Downs, one at Spithead, and the third at Cawsand Bay; each of them are to be under the command of a captain in a small frigate. These are to be exclusive of those which are placed at Milford, in the Bristol Channel, at Scilly, and at several of the ports in the Channel. The above divisions of gunboats to be occasionally put under the command of the commanding officers of the squadrons when the service requires it.

Some fireships to be also attached to these squadrons.

their station and returning frequently to the rendezvous.

General instructions to be given to them for attacking and destroying any armament either on the French coast or in its passage to any part of the English coast ; in the former of which service they will, if necessary, be assisted (under most special instructions) by the co-operation of the land forces. For this purpose a proper division of the ships fitted as transports will be stationed at each of the above anchorages.¹

As it is in contemplation when the season is little further advanced that the ports of Dunkirk, Havre and any others in the Channel which may require it should be declared in a state of blockade and that notice should be given to neutrals accordingly, the squadron already under Sir Richard Strachan (stationed in the vicinity of Havre and the Isles of Marcou) and part of the squadrons attached to the Downs, St. Helen and Portland Road will be to execute this service as their respective situations may admit.²

Sir Edward Pellew's squadron to continue at and about Scilly and the Land's End under orders occasionally to stretch over to Ushant for information, and to intercept and destroy or capture anything that may be moving in that neighbourhood.

The Channel Fleet, consisting of about twenty sail-of-the-line and ten frigates with sloops in proportion, to watch Brest in rotation, and detach

¹ *Marginal note* : The transports belonging to the St. Helen Division may probably for convenience of embarking the troops be stationed within the Isle of Wight.

² *Marginal note* : It will be very desirable when the wind is southerly for some of our ships or frigates to be as near as possible to the French coast, and as the season advances they may probably be able to anchor it with safety and advantage.

cruising frigates into the Bay; repairing occasionally either to Scilly or Torbay (according to circumstances) or when necessary to Spithead or Cawsand Bay.

The particular instructions to be given to the Channel Fleet will of course depend on intelligence of the enemy's motions at Brest, and should constantly be directed towards the prevention of an attempt on Ireland: while the separate squadrons in the Channel will probably be adequate to defeat any of the less considerable expeditions which may proceed from ports in the Channel.

For the purpose of the defence of Ireland the station at Scilly (which it is supposed by the latest accounts received of it is very well adapted for the anchorage of a small squadron at least) seems the best calculated. In the good season when the Brest fleet appears to be in readiness for sea, the squadron appointed to watch it would do so with great effect by anchoring in St. Mary's Road, and keeping a chain of frigates and sloops for the purpose of obtaining constant information of what was going forward at Brest. This station would be particularly useful in a strong easterly wind when a squadron cruising off Brest might be driven away too far to the westward; whereas in Torbay if an easterly wind comes on, it is absolutely necessary for the fleet to put to sea.

SPENCER TO PITT

Enclosing Memorandum for the Cabinet

Dear Sir,—I enclose a draft rather hastily made (having been much occupied since I saw you on a variety of official business) containing the best

answer that occurs to me to the queries which you put into my hand yesterday after the Cabinet brought up. On some of the points I am aware that it would be possible to go into a much greater detail; but I submit to you whether it will be necessary to do so, either from the view of an advantage that could be derived from it in respect to practice, or from a consideration of the time which would necessarily be consumed in following it up for the purpose of being completely master of the whole details, without which a just opinion cannot well be formed on any separate part of it. I conceived the general outline of the plan of naval defence for these coasts to have been pretty fully stated in the paper formerly circulated to which you have referred in the inclosed answers, and we have been acting ever since upon the ideas of that paper under an impression that not having been objected to they were approved.¹ If the whole or any part is thought to require alteration, I have no special objection to entering into the reconsideration of it; but I should be much inclined to think that such a revision would be more usefully made (if necessary) on a general view of the system, than entering into very minute details on every particular point of it; not because this detail is not absolutely necessary, but because it appears to me to be rather the business of each separate department than that of the Cabinet at large.

Believe me [&c.],

SPENCER.

4th April, 1798. Admiralty.

¹ This paper must have been similar to those *ante*, pp. 285.

ENCLOSURE

Queries on the Naval Defence, to which Answers are required by the Cabinet

1. What are the stations fixed on in the Channel for the several cruising squadrons (alluded to in Mr. Dundas's draft) destined to watch the enemy's ports ?¹

2. What is their strength and the instructions given to their commanders ?

3. What preparation of gunboats and other armed vessels calculated to act against troops embarked ?

4. The strength of the Channel Fleet, and the general plan of its employment ?

5. Instructions to the admiral when it puts to sea ?

6. How is the land and sea defence combined ?

7. Précis of intelligence ?

Answers to the Queries

1. The stations fixed upon in the Channel in Mr. Dundas's paper were the Downs, St. Helens, Portland and Falmouth.² In the paper that I circulated containing general ideas grounded on the suggestions of Mr. Dundas's draft, I proposed stationing a squadron in the Downs, another at St. Helens, and another in Portland Roads (which latter, however, I expressed a doubt upon, with respect to its being well calculated for a permanent station), and gave some reasons for thinking that Falmouth might not be a proper station for this purpose.

¹ *Marginal note* : The Downs, St. Helens, Portland, Cawsand Bay, Scilly.

² These positions are not identical with those *ante*, pp. 233, 285.

2. Their strength was roughly and generally stated in the paper already circulated, and if a more correct return is required of it, it may easily be procured, though I am unwilling to tie down them to any other service by any such specification which should imply an obligation on the admiralty never to vary this arrangement ; such variation becoming frequently expedient from different causes which may arise on the moment.

The instructions to be given to their commanders must in a great measure depend on what is doing by the enemy on the coast immediately opposite to their stations, and will be generally directed to continuing as much as possible to the defence of our own coast ; the closely watching the enemy's ports ; and the interception of any force which may have put to sea from them.

3. It is stated in the same paper before alluded to that three divisions of gunboats are proposed to be stationed at the three principal rendezvous above mentioned. A variety of other gunboats of different kinds are proposed to be stationed (and in many cases are already stationed) on different parts of the coast where they are most wanted, some of them already full manned and others intended to be manned by the sea fencibles, who are chiefly composed of fishermen, smugglers and seafaring persons enrolled for that purpose.

The captains who were appointed to superintend the sea fencibles are now employed in concerting the best means of increasing this local supply of gunboats as much as the circumstances of the respective stations will allow.

4. Both these points are fully stated in the paper above quoted.

5. Must depend on the circumstances under which he is ordered to put to sea.

6. The land and sea defence is and must principally (as I conceive) be confirmed by the communication which takes place between the departments conducting each, in making previous arrangements for the defence of the country; the result of which communications is to be found in the several measures here enumerated with respect to the sea defence, and in others which make the subject of the several reports from commanding officers of districts with respect to the land defence.

There is another species of combination of land and sea defence which consists in the means taken for communicating intelligence from one to the other, at the moment of an attack taking place, and the signal posts on the coast aided by the men belonging to the sea fencibles, who are to be partly employed in keeping a look-out upon the coast, and by giving immediate information of any movements they may observe. afford the best means at present suggested of connecting the operations of the two services.

7. All the intelligence received from time to time has constantly been circulated for the information of the Cabinet, and it is all entered in books (now forming a pretty voluminous collection) kept on purpose. A précis of the latest intelligence last received may easily be made out, and shall immediately be prepared if it is required; but no very great stress can be laid upon the inspection of any such partial extract, because it cannot always be known what degree of reliance should be placed on any particular piece of information, and it is only from a general view and comparison of the whole that anything like a tolerable judgment of it can be formed.

HOME POPHAM TO SIR CHARLES GREY

Dover. 6th April, 1798.

Sir,—Considering my appointment as commanding the sea fencibles from Beachy Head to Deal inclusive,² I feel it not only my duty but very much my inclination to submit to you such ideas as have suggested themselves to me on the practicability of the enemy's landing in the above district; to which, although it may be correct to confine a public report, yet I hope shall not be marked as impertinent in cases where I presume to make any observation beyond the limits of my station.

It cannot be supposed that a predatory incursion or partial invasion will have any effect on the country beyond the first moments of its operation; consequently it is necessary to determine with what wind a general invasion may be made, so as to comprehend the coasts of Essex, Sussex and Kent, which are all the coasts that can be possibly estimated as within the Narrow Seas; but to make the combination complete, it must also be considered what wind will permit the transport to sail out of every port in Holland, Flanders, and France to the eastward of Havre de Grace, and at the same time insure the smoothest water on the coasts of England, because they can have

¹ This paper is of special interest, since it fell into the hands of the French staff. A translation, or rather a précis, of it exists in the *Archives de la Guerre*, annotated partly by Bonaparte and partly by other hands. Colonel Desbrière suggests Admiral Bruix or General Caffarelli, who was in command at Boulogne. The date of the annotations is not quite certain, but they appear to have been made during the Consulate. Desbrière, *Projets*, ii. 1.

² As a result of the experience Popham had gained as Naval Staff Officer with the Army in Flanders, 1794-5, he had elaborated a plan for the organisation of a naval militia for flotilla work known as the Sea Fencibles. It had been adopted, and he, early in 1798, had been appointed to command the most important section of the force.

no covering navy, and must very much depend on small vessels for the advantage of beaching.

The wind¹ from E. to E.N.E. will enable them to sail from the Brille, Helvoet-Sluys and Flushing for the southern part of Suffolk and the coasts of Essex, that is from Orfordness to Maldon River; the distance across the sea may be about thirty-five leagues.

From Sluys, Ostend, Nieuport and Dunkirk the same wind will carry them through the Queen's Channel and South Channel up the Swale, and the distance from Sluys, which is the easternmost part, to Feversham, will not exceed thirty leagues; and I believe it will scarce be necessary for me to say that they have more schoots and billanders in Holland than they can have occasion for on such an expedition, and that the turbot men are as well acquainted with the coasts of Kent and Essex and the channels leading to the Thames as our own pilots.

Taking it for granted that the invasion will be confined to the Narrow Seas, unless an attempt is made on Guernsey and Jersey previous to its commencement, I have named in the margin² the number of places from whence an embarkation may be made between Gravelines and Havre; and I shall now proceed to offer a few remarks on the coast between the South Foreland and Beachy Head, which is the western limit of my district. At the same time, Sir, I shall be much flattered to be asked an opinion of any other part of the coast where my local knowledge may enable me to assist you.

The fleet in the Downs and the Goodwin Sands are

¹ *Note by Popham*: In severe frosts with light moderate S.E. winds it is remarked that there is by no means so much surf on the coast as with the same portion of wind in open weather.

² *Note by Popham*: Gravelines, Calais, Boulogne, Etaples, Crotoy, St. Valery, Treport, Dieppe, Fécamp, Havre de Grace—distance from the above place to the S.W. coast of Kent and coast of Sussex from fifteen to twenty-five leagues.

such securities to the coast between the two lands that little is to be apprehended in that

In Eastware Bay, which is about a mile quarter long, a landing may be effected, but so surrounded with cliffs that I think the attempt would be very dangerous, as the enemy could expect any immediate support from the east. From a little to the westward of Folkestone sea wall near Dymchurch there is a fine bay miles on which infantry may land at any time; cannon and cavalry may be landed at half tide in many places, particularly near Sandgate. It is so bold a shore that large ships may anchor within half a mile in case the enemy mean to employ any of the Dutch men-of-war to cover the landing.

To the westward of Dymchurch the land breaks to trench to the southward, and consequently the E.N.E. wind, which I hold out as the worst wind for a general invasion, would make so much sea from thence to the Ness Point³ that it would be impossible to attempt a landing; independent of which the shore is so flat at and near Ramsgate that under the most favourable circumstances of wind and weather the enemy could only land infantry in small boats except at high water.

¹ *Note by Bonaparte* : The commodore has not observed that with a southerly wind the fleet in the Downs and the Goodwin Sands cannot prevent the French from coming to land on the coast between Margate and Ramsgate. [Bonaparte here seems to have had his chart upside down.—*Editor*.]

² *Note by Bonaparte* : The commodore's opinion here accords with all the coast pilots from whom I have been able to gather information. [This portion of the coast was afterwards strengthened by the Hythe Military Canal.—*Editor*.]

³ Dungeness.

⁴ *Note by Bonaparte* : It is true that with E.N.E. wind the sea breaks on the coast, but with the wind at S. to S.E. the sea along the coast which is then practicable. It is in any case false that it is only small boats that can come to the shore, indeed by 'small boats' he means the vessels of the flotilla.

From the Ness Point to the entrance of Rye Old Harbour there is a fine shingle beach steep to, and with an easterly wind it is as smooth as possible. From Rye Old Harbour to Hooksledge or the end of Pitt Level, a distance of five miles, there is an uncommon fine beach of sand and shingle, on which with an easterly wind a debarkation to any extent may be made.¹ In this space there is a harbour of more consequence than people are in general aware of ; it is formed by a natural beach thrown up parallel to the shore and at right angles with the entrance of Rye New Harbour. It is called Providence Harbour, and the sketch that I have the honour to lay before you will give you some idea of it till I have an opportunity of completing a survey of it for the information of Government ; but in the interim I have reported to the admiralty in a few words that I have seen fifteen square-rigged vessels lie there, that large cutters drawing 11 feet water use it, but as there is not more than 2 feet at low water over a muddy bottom, any vessels they choose to send there must take the ground.²

The tide rises on the springs from 11 to 18 feet, and with a very trifling expense and a little exertion, vessels of 10 feet draught of water may be got out and in at half tide ; but unless it is thought an object to give this harbour some protection, I left in for their lordships' superior judgment to decide whether it would not be more political to block it up than to open it.

I believe the harbour would be completely

¹ *Note by Bonaparte* : This is the opinion of all the authorities I have consulted.

² *Note in unknown hand* : I have sent the First Consul a drawing of this port in which 700 to 800 vessels of the flotilla could enter. If the channels are found to be defended it would be easy to take them in reverse.

under the range of mortars from Winch Terrace, but of this, Sir, you must be the judge ; nor should I now have presumed to touch on this subject had I not observed more dismounted lying on the coast.

From Hooksledge to Hastings there is an inaccessible cliff of five miles, having only two narrow passes, Ecclesbourne and Govers.

From Hastings to Bowpeep barracks the shore is rocky, and a landing would be attended with some risk at low water ;¹ but from Bowpeep to Bulverhithe, a distance of two miles, there is probably as fine a beach as any in the world for land infantry, cavalry, or cannon, and large ships may anchor in safety within half a mile of the shore.

From Bulverhithe Point, about four miles to the westward, the shore is rocky and cannot be landed at low water ; from thence to Beachy Head there is in general so fine a beach that a landing may be made at any time of tide, but an E.N.E. wind would make a considerable sea from Peverel Point to Langnez Point, as the coast trenches there runs to the southward ; but from Langnez Point northward to the pitch of Beachy Head the water would be perfectly smooth.

Although I have pointed out some spots between Hastings and Beachy Head that are rocky, yet they are not to be considered as barriers to a general debarkation in this bay, which certainly presents itself as a very spacious anchorage with the advantage of having been used with success on a former occasion ; but you, Sir,

¹ *French note* : These rocks may be avoided by keeping along the shore : they then afford an invaluable shelter for a flotilla.

² *French note* : This also is the opinion of all the parties. Near Beachy Head there is also a beach very suitable for landing.

the best judge of the back country and the opposition an enemy may meet in this extent of eighteen miles.

From Beachy Head to Selsey Bill there are some partial spots that are rocky, but an E.N.E. wind makes such smooth water along the coast, that the rocks can scarcely be said to prevent any part of it being made use of for the purpose of debarkation;¹ but I take it for granted that the commanding officer of that district will send you a report as to the coast, harbours, &c., &c., &c.

I am now building at Dover a row-galley to carry one heavy gun, and I think the admiralty will give orders for others of the same description to be built. Indeed they have applied to the Treasury at my instance to order three smuggling vessels, lately taken by the custom-house cutters, to be delivered over to me for the purpose of being lengthened and fitted as galleys; and when I get these vessels under my orders I think I shall be able to prevent the French row-boats from coming near this coast, either to reconnoitre or annoy our trade.

I hope, Sir, in a few days to be enabled to wait on you with a return of the number of men we are likely to obtain as sea fencibles, and to take your orders as to their disposition.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your devoted humble servant,

HOME POPHAM.

SPENCER TO DUNDAS

Dear Sir,—I believe that the communication between the land and sea service on the coasts

¹ *French note* : This is also true, but the distance between the coast and the flotilla ports begins to get considerable.

is already pretty well provided by means of signal stations, but it will certainly be very proper to communicate our disposition for the defence of the different points to the several commanding officers in a more regular and complete manner than has hitherto been done, and it shall be ordered immediately. On the same grounds it would be highly desirable that the reports of the several commanders-in-chief on the coast, in which their plan of defence is detailed should be communicated for the inspection of the Naval Lords of the Admiralty, and if there are any points which stand more immediately in need of naval assistance, it may if possible be provided.

I have been conversing this morning with one of the most intelligent of the Trinity House, who seems very well satisfied with the plan of operations we have adopted for the protection of the mouth of the Thames and coasts of Kent and Essex, and the whole business of the buccannery is now put on a clear footing.

I consulted him on the subject of the French ports in the Channel, with all of which he seems well acquainted, at least as far westward as St. Malo ; he is decidedly of opinion that no good can be done by sinking hulks as suggested in the latter part of your letter to us, for which he gives very satisfactory reasons ; but he seems, I think, to be more inclined to recommend the bombardment of Havre, though I am afraid the chief part of their vessels, by being high up the Seine, must be out of our reach.

The wind having changed, we have ordered Lord Bridport with a pretty strong squadron off Brest for the present. I think it is just possible that though the grand combined operation is not ready, the circumstances of Ireland may have

led them to accelerate their expedition to that country. We know that on the first of this month they had about nine sail-of-the-line out of harbour, and they may, on board of those and a certain number of frigates, send over an army which if landed would be very troublesome. We shall have a squadron on the south and west coast of Ireland of nine sail-of-the-line and several frigates, and by sending Lord Bridport off Brest now to remain there while the wind continues favourable to them, we shall have the best chance of frustrating their attempt, and in the mean time it is to be hoped that many of their friends in Ireland may be properly disposed of, so as not to be quite ready to join them on a future occasion. If this should happen I think it then very probable that they will defer their movement till the more general plan is ready to be executed, which evidently is not yet the case; and at that time our general system of defence will also be more complete, and we shall have all the means of watching their motions without constantly keeping our fleet at sea, by stationing it at Scilly or about; I should perhaps like better, in Douarnenez Bay close to Brest.

Believe me, dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

SPENCER.

Admiralty. 9th April, 1798.

Right Hon. H. Dundas, &c., &c.

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Wimbledon. 12th April, 1798.

My dear Lord,—I send you enclosed a letter from Captain Popham to Sir Charles Grey,

which Sir Charles has sent to Huskisson to communicate to me. I have wrote to Sir Charles that I have had a little conversation with you upon the subject, and that so far from Captain Popham having any shyness of speaking to Sir Charles without reserve on the business, it was both your wish and mine that they should converse the whole of it with minuteness, and report their joint sentiments. Perhaps your lordship may think it right to write a few lines to Captain Popham to the same effect. It will be as well, however, that Mr. Popham should be told that Sir Charles is the only man he is to talk with upon the business, for of all the projects I have ever met with it is the one where secrecy is of the utmost importance.

I remain, my dear Lord,

Yours sincerely,

HENRY DUNDAS.

(Received and answered 14th April, 1798.)

ENCLOSURE

Home Popham to General Grey

PRIVATE.

Dover. 10th April, 1798.

Dear Sir,—I am much flattered by the hand in some manner you have testified your approbation of my report on the sea-coast within the limits of my district ; and I trust it is unnecessary for me to assure you how happy I shall always be to give you every information in my power, more particularly in the instance you mention of the

harbour of Ostend; but as I have already laid a very detailed plan before Lord Spencer for the destruction of that port, you have only to inform his lordship of your wish to see it, and I have no doubt of receiving his commands to that effect.¹ In the interim I will with pleasure give you every general information on the subject, though I dare say you are convinced from the short time you remained in Ostend of the advantage the enemy may derive from that port in any intended invasion against this country, and how practicable the destruction of it is, provided the expedition is kept a profound secret.

I have the honour of being, with much respect,

Sir,

Your very faithful humble servant,

HOME POPHAM.

General Sir Charles Grey,
Commander-in-Chief, &c., &c.

THE KING TO SPENCER

Windsor. 12th April, 1798.
4 minutes past 6 P.M.

By the dispatches transmitted to me by Earl Spencer, I find Sir Richard Strachan has shewn his usual activity. I trust his having driven into the river Caen the gunboats which have come out of Havre will so far delay the supposed intention of the French to attack the islands of Jersey, Guernsey, and St. Marcou as to enable the reinforcement, which Earl Spencer has so very properly ordered, to arrive in time to prevent any attack

¹ As to this, see *post*, p. 316, note 3.

on those islands.¹ The conduct of Captain Pierrepont seems to deserve reprehension.²

GEORGE, R.

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Somerset Place. Tuesday Morning, 8 o'clock.

My dear Lord,—I return you Popham's paper in order that you may turn your thoughts to the naval force pointed out in the margin as requisite for the enterprise he suggests.³ By a few lines I had from Sir Charles Grey yesterday I am pretty certain this day or to-morrow will bring a report encouraging the attempt.

I forgot at the same time I mentioned the subject to you in a letter to send you the accompanying memorandum on the subject of sinking old ships in the mouths of the enemy's ports.⁴

The wind seems to be got to the east this morning, and I suppose by this time Lord Bridport

¹ Capt. Muskeyn had sailed from Havre on the night of the 7th with thirty-three flat-boats and a few gun-brigs, carrying troops to capture St. Marcou. Next afternoon, being met by the British frigates on the station, Diamond (Sir R. Strachan) and Hydra (Sir Fr. Laforey), they anchored under the shore near the Caen River. Strachan attacked till nightfall. Next day Muskeyn weighed to proceed, but on the 50-gun ship Adamant (Capt. Wm. Hotham) coming up to reinforce the British, he ran into the Caen River, where he was joined by seven gun-brigs and forty flat-boats, &c., under Rear-Admiral La Crosse from Cherbourg. The whole were now being blockaded where they lay by Strachan's cruiser squadron. James, ii. 128. Desbrière, *Projets* i. 341-5.

² There were also two officers of this name serving in home waters—Capt. William Pierrepont of the Naiad frigate, who in April was in Bridport's squadron off Brest (Schomberg, iv. 600), and Capt. Chas. Herbert Pierrepont of the Kingfisher sloop.

³ This was evidently Popham's original suggestion for putting in execution the idea of counter-attacks by a combined operation against Ostend.

⁴ Not found.

is off Brest. I think when I saw you, you mentioned the Texel and Dunkirk being blockaded. Sir Richard Strachan I know is at Havre. Are not some of the other cruising squadrons prepared to try how far Calais, or Boulogne, or Gravelines may not be proper subjects for a few bombs or fireships?

Yours faithfully,
HENRY DUNDAS.

(Private. 17th April, 1798.)

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Somerset Place. Tuesday, 3 o'clock.

My dear Lord,—I have received your note. I agree with you that the paper you sent to me respecting the distribution of the navy does not give the accurate information I had in view. The immediate object of my attention at the time I asked for it was with a view of trying about in every way to see how far a ship or two might not be spared from the West Indies with the object of enabling you to send more speedily to the Mediterranean for the preservation of Naples, if the Powers on the continent are really disposed to rouse from their lethargy.

I send for your perusal a letter from Jersey. It will be sent to you officially of course when you return it. Surely there must be large quantities of stout boats in that island. Would not Sparks's plan be of use extended to that *planned*?

I send for your perusal a letter I have to-day received from Bridport. When I had read so far as to see that he pointed at two stationary ships of the line I stopped, but upon looking on a little

further and perceiving that he talked of ships unfit for other service and of *manning* them on the spot, I thought it worth while to send you the perusal of the letter.

Blankett's paper is on a subject I have long considered and think myself tolerably master of. People are so little accustomed to look to contingencies so very remote that I have never made it the subject of separate discussion. Indeed if I had, with all the other demands on our naval force and the total want of military force I know not what I could suggest worthy of being attended to. Was it not for these reasons I should long since have endeavoured to draw the attention of Government to the propriety of getting into the possession of Egypt, which is in truth at this moment independent of the Ottoman Power. If any great European Power shall ever get possession of that country, the keeping it will cost them nothing, and that country so getting possession of Egypt will in my opinion be possessed of the master key to all the commerce of the world.

Yours sincerely,

HENRY DUNDAS.

I was so hurried and tired last night I could not find time to ask the few questions I wished of Captain Popham, but I desired him to call this morning, and saw him for a little. He is very sanguine, and so is Sir Charles Grey from the letter he wrote to Huskisson this morning. I wish it were gone. I told Nepean to inform you the King had agreed to six hundred effective men of the Guards. I am no judge of naval etiquette but I cannot help being uneasy at another nava man than Popham being introduced at the

¹ See *ante*, p. 215, note.

moment almost of sailing. It very much annihilates the responsibility of the projector, and perhaps something worse.

H. D.

SPENCER TO DUNDAS

SECRET.

Dear Sir,—Feeling the force of the arguments which have suggested themselves to Sir Charles Grey on the subject of Captain Popham's having the command of the expedition, I have endeavoured, though not without considerable difficulty, to make such an arrangement as will allow of it, and I think you may venture to set Sir Charles at ease on that point. I cannot, however, avoid showing that in these matters I shall, with all possible disposition to concur in making the joint services that may be undertaken go on well, be under the necessity of protesting against this peremptory sort of nomination of *naval* commanders by land officers,¹ as well as against the kind of appeal upon the subject which I perceive has been made on this occasion by Captain Popham to Sir Charles Grey. Captain Popham should remember that he is a very young captain, that he never commanded a ship-of-war of any description (as far as I know) in his life; and I am not without apprehensions that his being placed in the command of a squadron on this occasion may give great disgust and offence to the profession who are sufficiently irritable in these matters.² Had any common transports

¹ Compare his earlier protest on the subject, *ante*, vol. i. p. 181.

² Popham was now in his thirty-sixth year. He had been given post rank in April 1795 for his services with the army in Flanders and then only at the urgent personal request of the Duke of York, but he had not been given a ship.

been employed, I should for these reasons have preferred employing him as an agent for transports, the sort of line in which alone he has hitherto been known in the service, and in which he has very much distinguished himself; but as that is not the case, the only way to give him authority appeared to be [to] place him in one of the ships *armés-en-flûte* and only to employ such ships as have captains junior to him, which shall be done.¹

Yours, my dear Sir [&c.],

SPENCER.

Admiralty. 25th April, 1798.

SPENCER TO DUNDAS

Dear Sir,—I return you General Gordon's letter. He could not have complained of want of force at a worse moment, as we have now more ships-of-war on that station for the express purpose of protecting the islands of Jersey and Guernsey than we have had for a very considerable time past; and if they are not placed exactly within his view, they are certainly very near him. It is probable that they have been rather in the neighbourhood of Guernsey at the time that he writes, because the enemy's preparations at Cape La Hogue and Barfleur appeared rather to threaten that island immediately than the other, particularly with the wind at east; but the protection of both was very particularly pointed at in the instruction given to the commanders of three or four frigates, a bomb vessel and some

¹ He was eventually given the command in Expedition (26) with four other small frigates, seven sloops, two bombs, and eleven gun-vessels. Schomberg, iv. 600.

smaller vessels that have lately been sent over there in addition to the force usually stationed there.

The letter from Milford expresses more apprehension about that place than I own I feel, and as to the remedy suggested of stationing ships of the line there, I think [even] if we had them to spare, we might place them to much more advantage. If the French fleet should ever enter it, I believe they will find sufficient difficulty in getting out again to deter them from repeating the experiment ; and though I am aware that it would be a very undesirable event, especially for that neighbourhood, there are many other points which, in a general view of the service, I should feel it necessary to prefer for such a stationary force, if such a stationary force were to be spared.

Your intelligence from *Havre* is very curious, and a good deal of it (particularly with respect to Havre) well worthy of attention. I don't know who it comes from, but I cannot conceive how any person travelling the country can know as much as the writer pretends to do of the secret views and intentions of the Government.¹

There is no doubt but that if left to themselves the French may in a certain time form a considerable fleet in the Mediterranean, but I have always thought, and still continue more and more to think, that with Spain against us it will be very difficult for us to prevent it. Mr. Eaton² says that the Neapolitan fleet cannot be protected by the batteries on shore ; how then is our fleet to be protected, if it happens, as it may very easily happen,

¹ See next document.

² Possibly Mr. William Eaton, who is mentioned several times by Nelson as buying stores for the Mediterranean fleet. Nelson called him ' a giant in promises, a pigmy in performances.'

to be very considerably inferior in strength and number to their's? In short, while there is a Spanish fleet at Cadiz of thirty sail-of-the-line apparently ready for sea, and a fleet at Brest which is likely to become that number in less than two months, I really see more difficulty in embarking in a new Mediterranean campaign than can easily be surmounted, and unless we should have the good fortune of an opportunity of striking some pretty decisive blow at one of these fleets, we must make up our minds to the French dominion of the Mediterranean.

I shall keep Mr. Beatson's letter by me a little longer to see whether we can make anything or not of his ideas.¹

Yours very sincerely,
SPENCER.

Admiralty. 26th April, 1798.

MEMORANDUM OF INTELLIGENCE

I

The English fleet belonging to Sir Richard Strachan's squadron, which lately threw some shot into Havre, approached it at high tide by observing at low water the depths of the tracts in the sands which the current had made, and then calculating the rise of the tide at high water at four fathoms pushed abreast of the town. The balls went with effect, not only into the town but a considerable way beyond it. As bombs carry one-third greater distance than shot, it was concluded

¹ Possibly Robert Beatson, author of *Naval and Military Memoirs of Great Britain from 1727*. He had served in the Royal Engineers in several of the combined operations of the Seven Years' War.

at Havre that on the next spring tide the town and shipping would be bombarded and burned ; but it has been found that the reason why the shot from the batteries did not reach the frigate was the powder being bad. It was Spanish powder sent by the Americans, and has been in store at Havre these two years.

The gunboats and a number of vessels have been drawn up in such a manner that in case of a bombardment they can be scuttled and sunk. In the harbour are *four* frigates, *four* or *five* corvettes, about *twelve* gunboats ready, and *eight* building.¹ The troops in the town were about 3,000, but shifted every forty-eight hours for fear of mutiny.

To forward the march of the army to Brest, the troops in detachments were carried, in the night, across the Seine, and as the greatest part of them were regiments of the army of Italy, which had come by the route of Germany through Picardy and Artois to Abbeville, &c., this saved a march to Brest of from 100 to 130 miles.

The attempt on the English isles of Jersey, &c., was first to be made, as it was felt that while England retains these stations, they procure pilots and have opportunities to watch the preparations on the coast of France.

2

Every day emissaries arrive from England and Ireland, and great secrecy is observed respecting

¹ The official return of 21st March gives the Havre section of the flotilla as 4 frigates, 5 corvettes, 10 gun-vessels, 4 luggers, 24 Swedish boats, 9 gun-boats, 3 bombs, and 60 row-boats. Desbrière, *Projets*, i. 335. In May Forfait found these vessels, or most of them, ready. *Ibid.* 335. Besides the above war vessels the return shows over 300 transport craft.

the manner of their conveyance, but which is believed to be partly by boats and partly by neutral vessels.

3

These emissaries either go to Paris or to Brest where Napper Tandy and Tom Paine are. The former has engaged to accompany the expedition to Ireland, and it is said that if the expedition to England can be effected, the latter is to attend it. He is supposed to hold constant correspondence with the seditious and rebellious in England. He is to accompany the expedition—the troops of the army of England have been promised a *milliard* as a *reward*.

4

From the conversations at Paris it appears the scheme is to revolutionise Sardinia and Naples then break with Prussia, on account of contributions to be demanded from Hamburg ; next with Austria, connected with the attempt of a revolution in Poland. A demand of a contribution has been made on America. The American Commissioners have left Paris.

5

The strange scheme respecting Egypt is supposed to be founded on some forced agreement at Constantinople, by which route about 400 officers have, in small companies, been sent to make their way to India, and to offer their services to Tippoo Sahib and the Mahrattas, in order to excite a war in Hindustan favourable to the expedition to Egypt.

The expedition to Egypt, if it should not succeed, is intended to carry out of France a large body of the army and Bonaparte ; and thus get rid of troops and of a man for whom the Directory have no further use.¹

Merlin of Douay² is at the head of affairs—the power of Barras and Bonaparte is declined—both are suspected.

6

The English newspaper, the *Courier*, is regularly brought over, carried first to the Minister of Marine, who marks it with a P ; it is then sent to the Central Bureau, and then the paragraphs allowed to be translated into the French papers, which are distributed among the coffee houses.

Sometimes the *Morning Chronicle* is to be met with, but no other English paper.

[*Endorsed*: To the Right Hon. H. Dundas, &c., &c.]

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

PRIVATE.

Somerset Place. 27th April, 1798.

My dear Lord,—The accompanying sketch is formed from a conversation which my informer had with the person who lately came from Havre and whose information I conveyed to you yesterday.

¹ On 23rd February Bonaparte after a tour of inspection of the flotilla ports had pronounced against the practicability of the enterprise, and had suggested an expedition to the Levant 'to menace the commerce of India.' Desbrière, *Projets*, i. 367–91.

² Merlin of Douay had displaced Carnot from the Directory in September, 1797.

I can give you nothing to enlighten you either as to the character of the informer or the means of information he is possessed of; and the only use such information can be of is by comparing it with other channels and thereby judging of its probability. The original informer is an American. He is in no respect in the pay or employ of our Government. He does not know that any part of his conversations are communicated to me, but he is in great habits of intimacy and acquaintance with a respectable and intelligent person in the city who has access to me whenever he conceives he has anything worth communicating to me. He came to me two days ago and stated that from several circumstances, some of which he hinted at, he had reason to think the information which he collected from his American friend had more the air of authenticity than most others he had met with, and therefore he thought it his duty to convey it to me as it occurred. I thanked him and hoped he would continue as dexterously as he could the same train of conversation, and in consequence of that desire I have received the accompanying late last night.

Yours,
H. D.

[*Endorsed* : Mr. Dundas, enclosing plan and information.]

POPHAM TO SPENCER

Dover. 3rd May, 1798.

My Lord,—Your lordship will see by the inclosed letter that the last idea I suggested for your consideration has met the opinion of the smugglers as to the ease with which the objec

may be accomplished.¹ I believe the instrument wanting from their satisfaction is your written authority to me to promise a reversion of outlawry to two men who shall be named in the margin on their performing the service in question.

It is then to be considered how to fix the time of burning, which ought to be when we are on that coast ; and I submit to your lordship whether the best mode of doing this will not be, to say it is probable, on or about a certain day, two or three gunboats, may be spared to run into the Wieling, and on their heaving in sight the conflagration must begin ; the gunboats will then stand as near as possible, firing at the guard-ship and the town to increase the confusion, when the incendiaries must endeavour to make their escape. It may also be said the gunboats will fire several guns, as a signal of approach, either the night before they appear or the morning they stand in. These circumstances will lead from the first object, and the firing at Ostend will answer as the signal of approach.

There are always fire-balls at Woolwich, at least I imagine the composition is ready for making up ; but it may be still better to give the recipe to the smugglers, for fear the balls should be discovered in their boat. Any article not to be procured at Flushing they can carry over, and nothing is more easy to fire than one of these balls, as it may be done with the priming of a pistol.

¹ Internal evidence shows that this was a project of firing the transport schoots at Flushing while the Ostend expedition was proceeding. (See enclosure.) The information of the Government was that a large number of gunboats and schoots had been collected at Flushing which were to be passed through the Bruges canal to Ostend, and so to Dunkirk. Hence Popham's plan of destroying the canal gates at Ostend. Schomberg, iii. 108.

It will be very difficult to ascertain the number of troops in the island,¹ as all the men I have conversed with from that place agree in one point, that the troops are so continually arriving and quitting the island that no information can be depended on for twenty-four hours.

There are several of the established pilots of this place who are well acquainted with Ostend; the two I know of are Robert Grigs the elder and Robert Grigs the son; I imagine there must be an order for those two especially, or they would send the two first in rotation for men-of-war.

I have the honour to remain,

Your lordship's most faithful

humble servant,

HOME POPHAM.

(Secret.)

ENCLOSURE

A Smuggler to Popham

Sir,—Having considered your proposition to burn the schoots in Flushing Harbour on the terms you propose, which is to get two people cleared who are outlawed, I am willing to provide the two people, provided you get a written instrument to lodge giving you authority to clear the two men. You must plan the method and tell me how to mix the ingredients for firing and when the signal is made it shall be done. The boat that came in our beach yesterday came from Flushing on Monday. There was then about 200 schoots. None have sailed yet for Dunkirk; those that were ready the schippers refused to go with. I expect

¹ Walcheren.

another boat to-night, and I will come to you to-morrow if she arrives. I hope I shall be ready for burning in a short time.

I am dear Sir,

Your most [&c.],

[*Signature undecipherable*].

Thursday, 2 o'clock.

[*Endorsed* : Enclosed in Captain Popham's letter, 3rd May, 1798.]

LORD GRENVILLE TO DUNDAS

Cleveland Row. 2nd May, 1798.

My dear Dundas,—It is an awkward confession to make, but I really am not sure that I accurately recollect which of two things was agreed with our Dutchman—whether that they should occupy the place in question, and then send to our fleet off the Texel, or that they should wait till we appeared in force off the place, and should then invite us to take possession. To say the truth I imagined that the details of this would be settled (and I rather believe they were so), when he saw Lord Spencer the night before he went.

I have received great pleasure from what Lord Spencer tells me to-day he has arranged with respect to the Cadiz station, and I am quite convinced that this was the best step that could be taken on this subject. What is now most wanted is a good commander-in-chief in Ireland. Why does not David Dundas go there? ¹

Ever yours most truly,

G.

(Enclosure in Mr. Dundas's letter of 4th May, 1798—from Lord Grenville.)

¹ Quartermaster-General. See *ante*, p. 227, *note*.

names shall be delivered to you ; and further if the attempt shall prove successful, a competent and liberal reward will be granted to them.

Yours [&c.],
SPENCER.

4th May, 1798. Admiralty.

SPENCER TO POPHAM

SECRET.

Captain H. Popham.

4th May, 1798.

Dear Sir,—I have to acknowledge several letters from you which I have not answered from great pressure of business ; however you will perceive that we have not neglected you, and I determined at last to appoint you to the 44-gun ship, because you may with the greater ease and the less suspicion order her to be lightened and trimmed in the way you may judge most proper for the purpose intended.¹

Admiral Young wrote to you yesterday with the names of the ships intended to be under your orders ; and we shall besides have some larger ships off Dunkirk about the same time to keep a look out on the frigates there, which now appear to be in a greater state of forwardness.

I do not find that the ordnance storeship in the former has any carcasses or 6-pounders ; therefore I hope that a proper supply of them will have been demanded and provided.

I am still very averse to the Flushing part of the scheme any farther than as connected with your letter of yesterday. Inclosed you have my

¹ See *post*, p. 336, note 2.

sentiments on that subject, which has not gone further than between me and the other person whose name is mentioned in the inclosed.

The mode you propose will do very well, except that I should think a good active officer in a handy fast-sailing vessel should be at hand off the Deurloo Passage to pick up the persons in question.

I don't see how gunboats can do anything up there against the guardships, and with the wind westerly it would be dangerous to risk running far in.

The final instructions are preparing and will be sent as soon as finished ; the troop ships will be round from Portsmouth very shortly, and the others are all in the neighbourhood or within call.

Yours [&c.]

4th May, 1798.

(Lord Spencer to Captain H. Popham. Draft unsigned.)

✓ *DUNDAS TO SPENCER*

PRIVATE.

Park Street. Wednesday, 5th May, 1798.

My dear Lord,—I would have wrote to your lordship this morning at any rate to send the enclosed, but I am more inclined to do so from having met the King this morning on his ride, when he naturally addressed me on the subject of our expedition, and will resume it again to-day when I see him in his closet. I know too well the difficulties which all public offices have to encounter in the execution of their business ever to entertain a disposition to criticise on any other department ; but it is impossible to shut my eyes against what

I took the liberty of stating to your lordship at considerable length some time ago. I mean that there is a backwardness somewhere in somebody under you in expediting what they may not approve of or have not themselves suggested.¹ The responsibility of the Naval Department lays with you and you only, and your colleagues in Cabinet can look nowhere but to you for the rapid and prompt execution of what is resolved upon. If I am to conjecture from the many anxious and fretful letters I have for several days received from Sir Charles Grey, it is obvious that all the orders have not yet gone to the ships to be employed on this occasion, and for aught I know other orders may not yet be gone upon other points connected with the naval part of the service.² The recourse which has been had to the smugglers I do not blame, because it may add much to the facility of the execution, but your lordship must be aware how much it endangers the secrecy of the whole. This surely is an additional reason for dispatch, and I am sure when this project was first formed it never entered into my imagination that the naval part was that which the progress of the expedition would wait for; and you will recollect, my dear Lord, that almost three weeks ago you stated to me your belief that the naval part would take ten days, and that then you stated it as a long but a necessary time. In point of fact, I think it only further necessary to mention to you that Sir James Pulteney dined in town yesterday just arrived from Ireland (?), and in company at dinner made use of observations which led

¹ Dundas's complaint was probably not without cause, as there was certainly much jealousy felt about Popham's appointment and resentment at his influence.

² See *post*, p. 336, Grey to Huskisson, 8th May.

persons present to think something was going on.¹
 Sir James himself is no ways in the secret.

I remain, my dear Lord,

Yours sincerely,

HENRY DUNDAS.

(Received same day.)

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Wimbledon. 7th May, 1798.

My dear Lord,—Both the enclosed letters are more proper for your consideration than mine.²

I remain, my dear Lord,

Yours sincerely,

HENRY DUNDAS.

Lord Spencer's Reply

Dear Sir,—With regard to the anonymous letter respecting Sea-fencibles being established in the Port of London, I do not think it necessary in the shape at least in which it has been done in the outposts or rather on some districts of the coast.³ The Trinity House are coming forward with a very useful and extensive plan of river guard, and we have also an offer from the water-

¹ General Sir James Murray Pulteney, Adjutant-General to the Duke of York in Flanders, 1793-4, had just been appointed to a command in Ireland.

² The letters enclosed were one from Mr. Windham, Secretary-at-War, on the subject of St. Marcou, &c., and an anonymous letter respecting sea-fencibles for the Thames.

³ The sea-fencible stations now extended from Fowey to Margate. North of the Thames were the Maldon and Southwold districts, and another was just being established at Hull. Schomberg, iii. 92-3.

men on the same subject ; and I should much fear that the protection which it would be necessary to grant to persons employed as Sea-fencibles would totally cut off the chance we propose to ourselves of a supply of men for the navy most grievously wanted at present, and which we expect to derive from the measure of suspending the Parliamentary protections for a time.

Since the receipt of the letters from Sir Richard Strachan to which Windham alludes, an addition has been ordered of fifty marines to the isles of St. Marcou, which was all that we could spare, and on the alarm the other day some marines and seamen were landed at each of the islands from the ships cruising in that neighbourhood.¹ As to the quality of the men to be sent thither, I have nothing to say, because we can only send them such as we have ; and if you choose to send regular troops there will be some jealousy arise between the commanders. Neither gunboats nor bomb-vessels can remain stationary there for their protection, nor, if they could, should I think it an advisable measure ; and Sir Richard Strachan is already instructed to attempt the destruction of the force in that neighbourhood, which he means to try when he next sails, though I perceive he has great doubts of the possibility of doing it, because every point where they lie is so well defended by gun and mortar batteries as not to be capable of approach without the utmost danger to our ships. If we would but learn a little from the enemy, all the weak parts of our own coast might be equally well protected.

Yours very sincerely,

SPENCER.

Admiralty. 7th May, 1798.

¹ See *post*, p. 338, *note*.

SIR CHARLES GREY TO HUSKISSON

SECRET.

Barham Court. 8th May, 1798.

Dear Sir,—I have the honour of your letter of yesterday, together with Mr. Dundas's additional instructions relative to the 11th Regiment and the Island of *Amelonds*,¹ which I shall most strictly conform to in my confidential orders to Major-General Coote. Mr. Nepean's letter of intelligence contains nothing to deter us, but on the contrary we have intelligence to be depended upon of a much later date, a very recent date that gives every reason to hope for success even at Flushing.

The wind continues to the eastward *and very little of it*; however I hope the ships may be able to work up, and be here to-morrow when no time shall be lost in expediting the whole.

Captain Popham has had an answer to his requisitions from Admiral Young, viz. :—

'I am sorry you are put into so ill-conditioned a ship.'² We will send you one hundred and twenty men from the *Irresistible*, which will enable you to do *tolerably well*'—Good God! what does Admiral Young mean by doing things by halves? Mr. Dundas must interfere, or all will go wrong—and get what was required yesterday, two lieutenants and an order for seventy men from the guardship in the Downs, for without that addition

¹ The Frisian island Ameland seems to have been the secret objective referred to in Dundas's letter of 4th May (*ante*, p. 330). The 11th Foot was one of the regiments which sent its light and grenadier company to Ostend. Fortescue, iv. 587.

² The *Expedition* (26). She was a 44-gun ship *armé en flûte*

the Expedition frigate cannot sail. I am sorry to say, I am very unwell.

I have the honour to be, dear Sir,

Yours most truly,

C. GREY.

(To Mr. Huskisson.)

POPHAM TO SPENCER

Deal. 8th May, 1798.

My Lord,—General Coote has been with me this morning to say everything was ready to embark ;¹ but I suppose this has been notified to your lordship officially. The process of making the fire-balls is so long by the recipe from Woolwich, that the smugglers have undertaken to carry a few over. They are very sanguine of success and appear very cautious ; for it became necessary on my leaving Dover to make the principal agent known to General Coote, and the General was obliged to go to his house last night in plain clothes. A boat came in from Flushing, but has no particular news. They say there are not more than 200 schoots collected.

I have the honour to be

Your lordship's most obedient

humble servant,

HOME POPHAM.

(Secret.)

(Received 9th. Answered 10th May.)

THE KING TO SPENCER

St. James's. 10th May, 1798.

15 minutes past 2 P.M.

On leaving the Queen's House I received Earl Spencer's note with the welcome intelligence of the

¹ Major-General Eyre Coote commanding the Dover district had been given charge of the troops for the Ostend expedition.

failure of the French in their attempt on the Isle of Marcou.¹ I flatter myself the prophecy of Earl Spencer will prove true in their future attempts. I hope we may be more fortunate in those made from hence.

HOME POPHAM TO SPENCER

Margate. 13th May, 1798.

My Lord,—I have much pleasure in telling your lordship that all the troops are on board; the artillery and miners' stores and tools with the mines will also be shipped in a very short time from the vessel in which they came from Dover.

Yesterday was nearly a lost day, it blew so hard; to-day it is squally, but I shall unmoor and go to sea in the evening if the weather appears at all settled. If I find that our intelligence is not correct, and that there is any considerable risk to be run in attempting to execute my orders, I hope I shall have fortitude enough not to attempt it, considering the number of men's lives committed to my charge. If I fail in the great object, I only wish your lordship to enquire into every particular of my conduct before an opinion is passed.

I transmit a copy of my arrangements, and I trust myself entirely to your candour and liberality, remaining with every sentiment of respect,

Your lordship's most devoted

humble servant,

HOME POPHAM.

¹ The attempt on Marcou had been renewed on the 6th and 7th of May when, owing to a calm, the cruisers could not interfere. But the attack was beaten off with heavy loss by the batteries and garrison under Lieutenant Price, R.N.

Lord Spencer's Answer

PRIVATE.

Dear Sir,—I have received your letter of yesterday which in your hurry you left unfinished,¹ and I am happy to find that you completed your embarkation yesterday with so much expedition and success. From the appearance of the weather to-day I am, however, in doubt whether you will have thought it right to move, and I hope that the several officers under your command will be discreet enough not to let anything transpire while they stay in the Roads.

I am, dear Sir [&c.],

SPENCER.

Admiralty. 14th May, 1798.

*POPHAM'S OPERATION ORDERS FOR THE
OSTEND EXPEDITION*

ORDERS FOR HIS MAJESTY'S SHIPS AND VESSELS
UNDER THE COMMAND OF CAPTAIN POPHAM
OF HIS MAJESTY'S SHIP EXPEDITION.

The ships under my command being intended for a secret service, the captains and commanders are requested not to say or do what may induce speculative opinions relative to any expedition whatever.

The ships will sail at a very short notice. Troops will be embarked with field-pieces and howitzers. The frigates will have to take a flat-boat each and probably other trifling stores.

Captain Popham will take the earliest oppor-

¹ See *post*, p. 347.

tunity to communicate with the captains and commanders the details of the particular service on which they are about to proceed, and in the interim requests their attention to the following arrangements.¹

Twelve flat-boats will be formed into two divisions, each commanded by a captain,² who are to superintend the debarkation and embarkation of the troops in their own boats.³ Two lieutenants to be appointed to each division to go in the flat-boats, a lieutenant to be in the second and fifth boat of each division, a midshipman to be in each boat. The lieutenants are to see a grapnel and hawser in each boat before they proceed on service.

The captains of the ships carrying flat-boats will be particular in the appointment of sober steady men to man them, as the safety and

¹ Popham's squadron was composed as follows :

5 *Troopships en flûte.*

Expedition (44)	16	guns
*Hebe (38)	14	"
*Minerva (38)	14	"
*Druid (32)	12	"
Dart (28)	16	"

4 *Frigates.*

Circe	28	"
Vestal	28	"
Ariadne	20	"
Champion	20	"

4 *Sloops.*

Harpy (brig)	16	"
Savage "	16	"
Kite "	16	"
Lion (cutter)	—	

2 *Bomb-Ketches.*

Tartarus	8	guns
Hecla	8	"

12 *Gun-Vessels.*

Wolverine	14	"
Blazer	12	"
Vesuve	4	"
Crash	12	"
Boxer	12	"
Acute	12	"
Asp	12	"
Cracker	—	
Furnace	12	"
Biter	12	"
Vigilant (armed lugger)		
Terrier		"

The ships marked * were amongst those originally prepared in view of expeditions of this kind. The luggers carried mines.

² *In margin* : Capt. Apthorpe, Capt. H. Birchall.

³ *In margin* : To be manned from Minerva, Druid and Hecla [Frigates armed *en flûte*.—Editor.]

facility of the enterprise will much depend on the management of the boats.

When the ships are under way the captains and commanders will be furnished with charts. Captain Popham will then communicate and explain the steps he has taken to enable the ships to gain their respective situations in the night to avoid making signals, which might intimate our approach to the enemy and prevent surprise. Armed cutters will be directed (with attention to the wind) to take stations at anchor if possible, at two leagues asunder, in a proper bearing, to lead the squadron directly to its object. The leading ships will be more particularly instructed in their route.

The following ships to be under way for the purpose of making a feint to land to the westward of the town at day-light and to endeavour to silence the batteries, or throw carcasses into the town, in case the obstinacy of the garrison should make it necessary by resisting the terms held out by the officers of his Majesty's land and sea forces :—

Champion
Dart
Wolverine

Crash

Acute

The Tartarus to anchor to the N.N. West of the town at about 1500 yards, or such distance as shall be judged best for the purpose of throwing shells into the town, and keeping as much as possible out of the range of the batteries.

Kite
Cracker

Asp
Vigilant (lugger)

Biter

To keep the harbour open and be ready to set fire to any vessels on the east side, cut them out,

or sink them. The Hecla to anchor east of the town for the same purpose, and at the same distance, if thought convenient, as the Tartar anchors to the northward.

Harpy
Ariadne
Expedition
Minerva
Savage
Blazer
Lion (cutter)

Circe
Vestal
Hebe
Druid
Terrier
Vesuve
Furnace

To anchor to the eastward in the manner the are put down, taking the Harpy as the westmost vessel.

There will be three debarkations of troops and artillery from the following ships and in the following order :—

1st Debarkation

The Expedition	. 250 men	} their own boats
Ariadne	. 100 „	
Minerva	. 250 „	
The Expedition, artificers		} her own boats
Artificers' tools, &c.		
Entrenching „ „		
The Circe	1 6-pounder	} their own boats
Vestal	1 8-in. howitzer	
Harpy	1 5½-in. „	

2nd Debarkation

The Vestal	. . 100 men	} their own boats
Savage	. . 50 „	
Harpy	. . 60 „	
Druid	. . 240 „	
Furnace	. . 20 „	
Vesuve	. . 20 „	

Ariadne	1	6-pounder	} their own boats
Druid	1	6 ,,	
Minerva	1	5½-in. howitzer	
Circe	1	5½-in. ,,	

3rd Debarkation

The Circe	.	. 114 men	} flat-boats
Hebe	.	. 250 ,,	
Ariadne	1	8-in. howitzer	} own boats
Savage	1	6-pounder	

As it will be necessary to land a certain number of seamen for the purpose of co-operating with the army in a variety of instances where their professional knowledge may be of much assistance, the officers and seamen who are landed to be under the command of Captain Winthrop of his Majesty's ship *Circe*, and subject to any alteration he may find of advantage to his Majesty's service.

Major-General Coote, who commands the land forces, will be happy to notice any extraordinary exertions in the officers and seamen landed from his Majesty's ships under my command; and as a perfect unanimity and good understanding between the two services facilitates and gives energy to every operation, Captain Popham trusts that the officers and seamen will so co-operate with the general and the army that they will seem but one corps, which in every situation must ensure success to his Majesty's arms, and to which great object Major-General Coote and Captain Popham have pledged themselves to give an unequivocal example for so desirable an end.

The officers and men to be furnished from the under-mentioned ships :—

	Captains.	Lieutenants.	Petty Offs.	Men.
Vestal .	0	I	I	25
Circe .	I	I	I	25
Ariadne .	0	I	I	20
Dart .	0	I	I	15
Minerva .	0	I	I	10
Druid .	0	I	I	10
Hebe .	0	I	I	10
Harpy .	I	I	I	20

Captain Winthrop at the Basin Gates, Captain H. Bazely¹ at the East Pier, to co-operate with Captain Brown in cutting out, burning or sinking such vessels as may be there.

Captains.	Lieutenants.	Petty Offs.	Men.	
I	2	2	40	Basin Gate
0	I	I	15	Upper Ferry
0	I	I	15	Lower Ferry
0	I	2	20	Eastward near Breedene
I	I	2	40	East Pier
0	2	0	0	Aides-de-camp to General Coote

After the troops, artillery and stores are landed, the boats are to return to their respective ships, but to hold themselves in readiness to go on shore as the signal is made from the Expedition.

In case the enemy should come down in such numbers as to oblige Major-General Coote to order a precipitate retreat, Captain Popham particularly recommends to the officers commanding the boats to enforce the greatest steadiness, coolness and regularity, and not to suffer any person to embark out of the order presented by Major-

¹ Of the Harpy. Capt. W. Brown commanded the Kite.

General Coote through Captain Winthrop, who will superintend the embarkation of the troops, either on the service being finished, or the necessity of embarking from superior force of the enemy.

It is necessary to observe that the shore is so bold where the embarkation is to be made that the ships and vessels can anchor sufficiently near to cover his Majesty's troops and prevent their being annoyed by the enemy; and the officers and men may be assured that every attention will be paid to this point, to ensure, if necessary, their retreat with that firmness and regularity which in every situation have been the characteristics of a British soldier.

It being of the utmost consequence that the different services should be carried into execution with much precision and regularity, Captain Popham thinks it right to place the responsibility of each particular duty on separate officers. Captain White of his Majesty's ship *Vestal* will therefore superintend the whole debarkation of troops, having under his command Captain Apthorpe of his Majesty's ship *Druid* and Captain Birchall of his Majesty's ship *Hebe*, with their divisions of flat-boats.

Captain Bradley of his Majesty's ship *Ariadne* to superintend and direct the debarkation of the artillery and stores; and Captain McKellar of his Majesty's ship *Minerva* is to consider himself under his command for this service.

The ships will be in four divisions, according to the form and order to be delivered; but that no time may be lost in the commanding officer of the division examining the situation and state of the carronades on board the gunboats:

Captain White will examine the *Blazer* and *Vesuve*.

Captain Raper will examine the Crash, Boxer and Acute.

Captain Brown will examine the Cracker and Furnace.

Captain Popham having considered with Major-General Coote of how much importance it is to get the mines immediately up to the gates for bursting them, there being a considerable quantity of powder to be moved, has made the following alterations in addition to the preceding orders. Captain McKellar of his Majesty's ship *Minerva* and the following officers in addition, to land under the command of Captain Winthrop, and to attend entirely to the duty of the mines, which are on board the *Lion* and *Terrier* armed vessels; Lieutenants Suckling of the *Furnace* and Lewer of the *Terrier*, with twenty seamen from the *Terrier*, ten from the *Furnace*, and fifteen from the *Lion*, to be landed for this particular service.

Major-General Coote has ordered 80 men of the 23rd Regiment, who are embarked on board the *Furnace*, *Terrier*, and *Lion* to be landed without arms, who are to attend to this service. The *Terrier* and *Lion* to land the mines in their own boats, and they are to be carried to the gates without a moment's loss of time.

Lieutenant Brownrigg of the Royal Engineers will be ordered by Major-General Coote to attend with Captain McKellar and give him every explanation as to the nature of the mines, the number of men it will require to carry each, and the quantity of powder necessary for charging them.

Most secret.

[*Endorsed*: The Ostend Expedition when General Coote capitulated. May, 1798.]

HOME POPHAM TO SPENCER

Off the North Foreland. 15th May, 1798.

My Lord,—I am so certain of your lordship's anxiety for the ships you have done me the honour to put under my orders, that I send this by an officer to return without landing a man. We anchored yesterday morning, and it is blown a very violent gale, many of the ships drove with their lower yards struck ; but I do not yet understand that the least damage has been received. The troops are in high spirits, and every possible accommodation is given to them by the captains and officers of the men-of-war. I hope your lordship will hear this represented through the proper channel.

The Viligant lugger has returned ; I wrote to Admiral Young I had dispatched her with sealed orders. Everything perfectly quiet, and not the sign of a camp or even a soldier to the eastward. I have cut off all communication with every vessel whatever belonging to the shore ; and the first favourable moment I will sail, though indeed, my Lord, I cannot promise you a very immediate prospect ; for at this moment the weather looks very unsettled, although there is not much wind. I think I am more sanguine of our success than ever if the weather but favour us ; it is the enemy I am most afraid of. I shall continue to keep your lordship informed of our proceeding by every opportunity.

In hurrying for the post on Sunday, I turned over the second sheet of paper on the quire, where I now find the conclusion of my letter which I

send to your lordship to explain the mistake of its leaving off so abruptly.

I am, my Lord,

Your lordship's most obedient
faithful servant,

HOME POPHAM.

Secret.

(Received 16th May, 1798.)

HOME POPHAM TO SPENCER

North Foreland.

16th May, 4 A.M. Expedition.

My Lord,—An aide-de-camp from Sir Charles Grey has come on board with some dispatches to General Coote, and I take the opportunity of his return to acquaint your lordship that we are getting under way. The weather promises to be fine, and if the present favourable appearances don't alter, I have every reason to expect that we shall land this night.

Whatever the result may be, I hope it will be proved that everything had been done to ensure success.

I wrote your lordship last night for to-day's post, but it is likely Sir Charles may forward this by dragoons.

I have the honour to be,

Your lordship's most obedient

and devoted servant,

HOME POPHAM.

Secret.

(Received 17th May, 1798.)

HOME POPHAM TO SPENCER

20th May, 1798.

My Lord,—From the intelligence I have just received from Admiral Peyton, and what I have

heard from other quarters, every preparation is made at Flushing to resist any attempt we may make ; and as it is possible that a great part of the body of troops now occupying the sand hills to the eastward of Ostend will march to Cadsand, it will be imprudent to land any men there for the purpose of storming the batteries ;¹ and I hope your lordship will give me your protection in shewing a particular degree of caution at the moment I am deprived of the able assistance of General Coote, who I am directed to act in conjunction with. Indeed had we been fortunate enough in our weather to secure the retreat of the troops in the first instance, I should have buoyed off the Wieling Channel with Blankenburg fishing vessels, if the pilots had refused to take us in. Probably I should have done it at all events as a matter of caution.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,
Your lordship's most obedient
humble servant,
HOME POPHAM.

Secret.

(Received 22nd May, 1798.)

HOME POPHAM TO SPENCER

Ostend Roads. 21st May, 1798.

My Lord,—Although I cannot congratulate your lordship on our succeeding in every point of view, yet I can assure you the great object of totally destroying the gates of the canal was

¹ Cadsand is the island forming the left or south bank of the Scheldt Estuary. Its capture was intended to be the opening operation of the Walcheren expedition in 1809. The rest of the letter shows that an attack on the Scheldt or Flushing flotilla was to have followed that at Ostend.

completely effected, and our ultimate want of success was owing entirely to the winds increasing to a strong gale soon after the troops had landed.

It is also much satisfaction to know that the amount killed and wounded has not exceeded sixty, and that General Coote was enabled to capitulate in the face of a very large army after being twenty-four hours on shore without a greater loss.

The ships were anchored soon after one o'clock in the morning, and I believe quite undiscovered except by the pilot boat, which was cut out. I hope your lordship will be satisfied from the event that the thing was to be done, and that the only enemy that I had a right to apprehend danger from was the elements. If the wind had backed to the southward instead of the northward every person would have been on board by twelve o'clock, and we should not have lost more than three or four men.

Captain Winthrop went on shore at the time the general did ; he commanded all the officers and men landed, and completed the object committed to his charge, the moving the mines and powder for the destruction of the works. The general by his aide-de-camp spoke to me of him in terms of high commendation, and I beg to add my tribute of praise for his extraordinary exertions in every instance.

I hope your lordship will not think I have presumed in giving Lieutenant Edmonds an order to command the *Minerva* till your pleasure is known. Indeed I cannot say too much to recommend the three officers who placed this ship under the battery in so gallant a manner, and I hope they will be received under your patronage.

Captain Winthrop will be enabled to relate

every circumstance to your lordship from the time he landed till the general sent him off with a message, and he will also inform you how much bad weather we had to contend with.

I am very anxiously waiting the return of the flag I sent in yesterday to negotiate an exchange on honour of the prisoners taken, and by the time they have remained, I hope something favourable is taking place. Captain Winthrop has been detained some little time on this account, but as soon as the tide serves he will sail.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,
Your lordship's most obedient
and devoted servant,
HOME POPHAM.¹

(Received 22nd May, 1798.)

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

PRIVATE.

Wimbledon. 27th May, 1798.

My dear Lord,—Captain Popham has just been here, and I have talked over with him the general ideas which he has stated to you.² I cannot enter with him (or indeed almost with anybody that is not absolutely necessary to be conversed with) on the full extent of my feelings on subjects of this nature. I detailed them at length in my correspondence with you last winter, and the more I consider the state of the two countries, together with the allowed superiority at sea which we possess, I am as much satisfied as I ever was of any proposition in my life, that we cannot so effectually annoy the enemy or keep alive the spirits of our

¹ For an account of the whole operation see James, ii. 131-3; Schomberg, iii. 108-10; Fortescue, *British Army*, iv. 589.

² See Popham's memorandum *post*, p. 355.

country, as by constant unremitting offensive operations during the whole summer. It is not a matter of any moment whether on each occasion substantial mischief is done. The teasing the enemy and keeping them constantly alarmed on the coast for one place or another is of itself real good done to the feelings of the country and real mischief done to the government of France. For if they are neither to attempt an invasion nor to keep our bombs and shells out of their towns and harbours, how is it possible for them to prevent discontent gaining ground in their country, and rendering the war perfectly unpopular, not to mention other very probable consequences respecting the existing government itself? Put the case to yourself, that the French had the superiority at sea and omitted to annoy some town and harbour each night; do you think their government could stand the effect of such omission? If in place of being remiss, the government of the enemy should be active and annoy us in the manner supposed, do you think any government existing in this country could stand the shock which discontent would bring upon it? In short I am clear that no time should be lost, and that one attack after another, or two at the same time if possible, should be made so as that they never shall be at peace any one day or night. I have heard it stated that it is hard to distress innocent inhabitants of towns on the coast. That is a sentiment incompatible with the existence of war, and at any rate by summoning each town to give up its shipping and magazines before you bombard it, there is an end of all pretence of hardship. I need not at present trouble you more. The object is immediately in view and the mode of it has been already mentioned to you by Captain

Popham, and will of course be more detailed by him. I have desired Mr. Huskisson to send out Mr. Dane to me next Monday forenoon, and after that it will be best to send him back to Flushing to make another report of what is doing there. It may be as well to postpone that for some time, but I really see no reason to doubt its ultimate success. If we can be alive in our offensive movements at home and can strike some great stroke in the Mediterranean, the game must be up with the French government.

I remain, my dear Lord,

Yours sincerely,

HENRY DUNDAS.

I have not wrote so much with my own hand and eyes these ten days past.

(Answered 28th May.)

SPENCER TO DUNDAS

Dear Sir,—I am very sorry you thought it necessary to write so much at length (as I know it is very improper for you to write much now), more especially in order to convince me of a position of which I entertain no doubt at all. I perfectly agree with your arguments on the effect that will be produced by a vigorous offensive war on the enemy's coasts, and wherever any such measures can be adopted with the smallest hope of effect, and without too much endangering our own ships and men, I am quite of opinion it should be done.

We shall hear from Sir Richard Strachan tomorrow of some attempt he made on Thursday last at Havre, but, as the telegraph tells us, with no very material effect ; and when our bomb-vessels, which have been a good deal damaged at Ostend,

II.

A A

shall be refitted, or others which are forwarding ready, we may resume our operations in the narrow part of the Channel between Havre and Dunkirk. I believe there are several places there that can be attacked with effect, and Captain Popham seems to think that something of the kind could be done at Calais.

We have just got an account of the Flushing shoofs preparing to pass by sea to Dunkirk, and I hope our squadron on that coast will be able to intercept them if they attempt it, the operation at Ostend having, I trust, made it impossible for them to go any other way. But I suppose the lying report of the Dutch *Gazette Extraordinary* which I have just seen will serve to encourage them to put to sea with this fair wind.

I think the news from Ireland very good, as it is evidence they have been forced to rise prematurely. We have ships enough ready for the troops you may wish to send, and have ordered one round Plymouth for the 25th Regiment, if that should be fixed upon. We must not, however, let the Lord Lieutenant keep them too long. Nor ought we to disable ourselves for the Aucklands scheme.¹

I have not ceased to thank my stars that the first I knew of the duel yesterday was after it was over. I hope the same was your case, as the anxiety of expecting it without knowing the event would have been tremendous.²

¹ This may refer to the contemplated Parliamentary Union with Ireland in regard to which Lord Auckland was one of Pitt's principal advisers and supporters.

² On Sunday, 27th May, Pitt fought a duel with Tierney, his principal debating opponent in the House of Commons. The occasion of the challenge was that in a debate on manning the navy, Pitt had accused Tierney of deliberately obstructing public business, and had refused to withdraw the charge when it was ruled to be unparliamentary. Neither party was touched.

I should have rode over to you yesterday, but the heat was so great, I could not, being already a little heated. I am obliged to go into Northamptonshire on Thursday night for a couple of days, but I hope I shall not be wanted in that interval. My absence is on public business, or I should not think of moving at this moment.

Yours, my dear Sir,

Very sincerely,

SPENCER.

Admiralty. 28th May, 1798.

MEMORANDUM BY HOME POPHAM

Flushing

No attempt ought to be made at Flushing for at least three weeks, and every precaution taken to discourage the idea of such an attempt.

Pilots for the Outer Wieling¹

It will be absolutely necessary to have three or four good pilots for the outer Wieling, and the best mode of obtaining them will be to direct cutters to watch the motions of the transports at Flushing, as they cannot now go round by the canals, and to make themselves so perfectly masters of the outer Wieling that they can at all times run out without getting aground, which would very much delay the information being carried to ourselves off Dunkirk, or forwarded to England.

The cutters to cruise so far in that the vessels

¹ The Outer Wieling is the main outlet from the Scheldt southward, usually called The Wieling. The Inner Wieling was a narrower channel close along the Cadsand coast.

cannot go round to the eastward without being discovered.

Pilots for Camphire

The same precautions to be taken at Camphire for that channel.¹ That the bombs intended for the expedition should be employed, as soon as they are ready, to bombard Calais, Dieppe, St. Valery de Caux and Fécamp, as the most effectual method of leading the enemy from the object in question.

The bombs ought if possible to be those with 13-inch mortars, and the mortars iron.

In considering this subject I cannot help being of opinion that if it were possible the troops intended to be embarked should be embarked from Portsmouth, and an opinion might be encouraged that they were to co-operate with the squadron for the reduction of Havre. This might seriously take off the attention of the enemy from Holland, and after the troops are embarked it cannot be of consequence whether they were one day or one week at sea in this season ; indeed I think they are better after being a few days at sea, as they get more settled and better arranged.

A second collection of troops in the Isle of Thanet, and vessels in Margate Roads, would certainly lead to suspicion towards Holland, and the communication between the coasts of Kent and Essex with Flushing cannot be prevented.

(Captain Popham. *Secret.* 28th May, 1798.)

¹ He probably meant Ter Veere in the north of Walcheren (sometimes called Campveere) and the adjacent Veeregat channel. It was near here the main landing took place under his direction in 1809. The arrangements as proposed for concealing the objective are the same as those which were adopted on that occasion, and which bewildered the French Staff till the last moment.

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Wimbledon. 28th May. ½ to 5.

My dear Lord,—Mr. Huskisson has just arrived with the accounts which are arrived from Ireland. I have no hesitation in sending immediately to Ireland the only proper regular infantry we have in readiness, I mean the two brigades at the Isle of Wight and Barnstaple, amounting to above 3000 effective men, and at the same time to send over from Scotland a regiment of cavalry there, and other three regiments of cavalry from the places in England most contiguous for embarkation to Ireland.

It has of course occurred to your lordship that the enemy (if this rising in Ireland is in any concert with them) will in all probability attempt some predatory incursions on some parts of our coasts. The generals in all the districts shall be put immediately on their guard, and your lordship will in like manner feel the necessity of making your blockade of Brest as complete as it was in 1759, and have all your cruising squadrons at the mouths of every port where our intelligence leads to suppose any precautions are necessary for a descent on this country. If the rebellion can be speedily got under, and before any co-operation with France has been concerted or executed, by our watching, the thing in Ireland may be of the happiest consequences to that country. Mr. Huskisson will return to town this evening with all my directions.

Yours sincerely,
HENRY DUNDAS.

T. GRENVILLE TO SPENCER

Enclosing Memorandum on Driving the Country

My dear Lord Spencer,—Not having seen you at the Admiralty this morning, I have persuaded myself that I could do no harm in scrawling out upon paper a few loose ideas which I had intended to have talked to you about if I had seen you, because I have taught myself to think that some such notions might be usefully pursued in the present moment.

I have no value for the manuscript or the notions beyond talking it over with you, so when you have read it, you have nothing to do but to commit it to the flames and pursue the fancy or not, as you approve or disapprove.

Yours ever,
T. G.

Wednesday.

Ideas on Driving the Country in the event of an Invasion

In the event of an enemy's landing upon any part of our coast, it seems indispensably necessary, besides the military force which is to be opposed to them, to provide throughout the country active and intelligent civil magistrates, without whose authority and assistance it would not in this country be easy to take upon the sudden all those steps which military operations here may require. However doubtful it might be whether we could succeed in cutting off entirely from any enemy landed here all means of provision and forage, there can be no doubt in such a case of taking at least the obvious precautions of driving away the

cattle and the horses, and such grain as was already threshed and therefore most easily moved ; and yet this first step would be attended with great hazard and inconvenience unless it was executed under the control of known and respected proprietors in the various districts where it might be necessary. To throw this duty upon the army would not only be in every respect a waste and misapplication of our military force who might be much better employed, but would almost inevitably produce quarrels and contentions between the farmers and the soldiers, which might probably be attended with very dangerous consequences, and which it is very important as much as possible to prevent. On the part of the public too, who would ultimately have to repay the real damage suffered by every individual, a military commissary would afford very little check indeed upon the fraudulent demands for compensation in a district where he might be a total stranger to the existence and to the value of the property stated to have been damaged. An idea has been entertained that a sort of central committee might be formed in every county for these purposes, and for the object of obtaining a general co-operation throughout the whole island ; yet an establishment so novel might naturally create the mischief instead of preventing it. What reason, however, is there against trying to produce this effect by a little extending and combining the known and established authorities now existing in the country ; I mean the deputy-lieutenants and the justices-of-peace in every county ? The execution of the Supplemental Militia Law calls out now in its natural operation the different meetings of deputy-lieutenants and justices-of-peace throughout the kingdom. Would it not perhaps be advisable to

take this opportunity of increasing the number of deputy-lieutenants in every county, and giving certain districts to the superintendence of two or more of these deputy-lieutenants, to whom general orders should be given to keep lists of all constables, churchwardens, &c., in every parish within their district? If this was once done and proper attention given to selecting for the purpose men of influence, authority and decision, a general co-operation would at once be obtained, and the advantages arising from it would, as it seems, be very great.

Wherever any danger appeared, the commanding officer of the troops would instantly know how to find and be supported by all the civil authority which exists in the country; and if the deputy-lieutenants were interfered with, the importance of their being informed by accurate lists of the constables, head-boroughs, churchwardens, &c., in every parish might be invaluable, in case of any military operations from the landing of a foreign enemy. Certainly, too, the driving of the country would in this shape become infinitely more practicable than if it was wholly left to their own good will or wholly enforced by the military. Under these deputy-lieutenants perhaps, too, the yeomanry would be most advantageously disposed wherever they were not wanted for other military purposes. If these loose ideas appear to be at all [well] founded, there seems to be no difficulty in applying them to practice, beyond that of impressing the lord-lieutenants with the importance of selecting a sufficient number of capable and respectable persons, and drawing out two or three heads of instructions for them, requiring them—to have a fixed place of meeting, to have lists of constables in every parish, with the names of all persons

fit in case of necessity to be made constables ; and upon the coasts they should be prepared with some notion as to the driving of the country in order to do it as speedily as possible in case of necessity, in co-operation with and at the requisition of the military officer of the district. In Sussex, as it is said, forms of returns are already circulated for the purpose of obtaining this information. The only necessity for a new law, as it is conceived, would be if it was thought advisable, as it might be, to give more extensive powers to the lord-lieutenant and the deputy-lieutenants in case of actual invasion ; but it seems as if in some such shape as this all the advantages of a general and active control and co-operation may be obtained without the jealousy of any new or invidious institution.

PART VI

MEDITERRANEAN PAPERS

**FROM THE BATTLE OF ST. VINCENT TO THE
END OF 1797**

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THOUGH the battle of St. Vincent had greatly relieved the naval situation, it was long before it had any marked effect on the war as a whole. The Spaniards had still so large a fleet in Cadiz and Cartagena that a re-occupation of the Mediterranean was impossible. Not only would such a movement leave the communications of the fleet exposed, but the French preparations in their northern ports, which were variously supposed to be intended for Ireland or Portugal, made it essential that the Cadiz fleet should be held in check. Early in April, therefore, Lord St. Vincent, having completed his refit in the Tagus, moved down to watch Cadiz, with some hope that the Spaniards would hazard another battle for the sake of their trade and western colonies.

In this way the home situation was secured, but so far as the Continental War was concerned it meant that the British Fleet was demobilised and unable to assist her Allies. Austria, who was still struggling to recover her lost ground, began at once to protest and to call for a squadron in the Adriatic at least, in order to secure the communication of her army in Italy with Trieste. At great risk a cruiser squadron was detailed for the work, but before it could reach the ground, Trieste had fallen and the Austrians had signed the Convention of Leoben. This eventually ripened into the Peace of Campo Formio and brought the First Coalition to an end. To the British Government Austria excused her action on the ground that she had not received adequate naval support, and it is clear from St. Vincent's letter to Spencer of 5th May that he was inclined to agree; believing that if he had

been sent out at once to succeed Hood he could have paralysed the French campaign from the outset.

As it was, he had to content himself with holding his position at the mouth of the Straits and withdrawing the Porto Ferrajo garrison. As it became evident that the Spaniards did not mean to move—at least during the season when it was possible for him to maintain a watching position—he endeavoured to destroy the fleet in harbour with bombs.

When this proved impracticable, he detached Nelson, who had had charge of the operations, against Teneriffe, but not only did the expedition fail in its object, but it had no effect on the immobility of the Cadiz fleet.

The reason soon began to appear. The Directory, in concert with Spain—not content with having forced us to quit the Mediterranean—was engaged in a scheme for compelling St. Vincent to loose his hold even on the mouth of the Straits and the waters of the Peninsula, by depriving him of his base. The Cadiz fleet would then be free to combine with the Toulon and other squadrons for an offensive return. With this object, such severe pressure was brought to bear upon Portugal to enter the French system, or at least to induce her to exclude our ships from her ports, that her Francophil minister in Paris was persuaded to sign the preliminaries of a treaty to that effect. But the Government at Lisbon—finding itself as usual between the devil and deep sea—saw difficulties in the ratification, since the exclusion of British ships was in conflict with the existing Anglo-Portuguese treaty. Still, so weak were the Portuguese Ministers and so unready the country for resistance, that we had to prepare for the worst. All arrangements were made for withdrawing the troops which we had sent to stiffen the Portuguese army under General Stuart and for removing the naval stores ; but on a broad hint from Lord Spencer, St. Vincent left the blockade to Commodore Collingwood (having by that time got rid of his incompetent flag-officers) and went in person with a division of the fleet to Lisbon to see what the terror of his personality and his naval diplomacy, of which he was

not a little proud, could do towards preventing the ratification.

In this work he was occupied till the end of the year, and it is interesting to note that in the eyes of this fighting admiral, and indeed of everyone else, the preservation of the base at Lisbon took precedence as a strategic object over the attempts to bring the enemy's fleet to action. The policy was so far successful that invaluable time was gained. For though at last the Portuguese Government decided to ratify, they found they were too late, and the last news of the year was that the Directory was insisting on a new treaty being begun on terms even more anti-British than before.

For some reason the whole episode of the struggle for the Tagus scarcely finds a place in our histories, but it will be seen that at a time when we were threatened with isolation, it was considered vital to our ability to continue the war. The following papers indeed make it clear that the result of our long war experience had been rather to enhance than diminish the strategic importance of such naval positions. The men who knew what naval war was were dominated by the idea that though battles might place in our hands the command of the sea, the exercise of that command was impossible, without advanced bases rightly distributed. The view that the alliance of Portugal, or at least her benevolent neutrality, was essential, as St. Vincent points out, to our being able to exercise control of the great Mediterranean and oceanic trade routes was of course a tradition of our foreign policy already two centuries old, but age and experience had only increased its vitality. Never had its significance been more obvious than in the crisis these documents cover, and not the least point of their interest is that they enable us to understand whence came the moral force which in the latest years of the Great War gave ministers the power and will to support Wellington as stubbornly as they did in face of all opposition.

SPENCER TO JERVIS

1st March, 1797.

Dear Sir,—The very uncommon pressure of business which has arisen within these few days, both in and out of Parliament, has so occupied my time that I have delayed till the very moment our express is going off to write to you on the present state of our naval operations, with the general outline of which it is, however, so desirable that you should be acquainted, that in as few words as I can I will now just run over it.

The preparations at Brest, combined with the several articles of intelligence which from different quarters we receive concerning them, seem to point very decidedly at an intention of renewing their attack on some part either of Great Britain or Ireland at no very distant period (possibly about the time of the equinox or very little after it). It is not improbable that the plan is combined with some intended movement of the Spanish fleet; and from the circumstance of their coming out of the Mediterranean, I should rather expect to see them in the Bay of Biscay or in the mouth of the Channel early in the next summer. Should this be the case, it will be indispensably necessary that the fleet under your command should also be in these seas, for without it, our line-of-battle, notwithstanding the squadron extent of our navy at present, would be much too inferior in number to the combined force of the enemy. This therefore I take to be the grand point to which you will have to attend during the next campaign, never if possible to suffer the main body of the

fleet of Spain to be between you and us, and of course in the meantime to take every possible measure for distressing and crippling them as much as you can. Early and authentic intelligence of their operations at Cadiz, and of their other ports, will be of very great service, and the more of it you can convey to us of a kind on which you may depend the better.

I have seldom been more disappointed and chagrined than I was at perceiving how entirely all the very well-formed plans you had imagined for bringing away the remains of our Corsican army in safety has been frustrated by the ill-judged scruples of the general.¹ It is unfortunate that you should suffer in one instance by too great a discretion being assured (as in the case of Admiral Man's return to England) and in another by too little, as in this last instance. I am still however willing to hope that they may escape in safety, though the risk is doubtless much increased.

We are preparing to send you out a fine reinforcement of ships-of-the-line, with the *Ville de Paris* at their head; she is, I flatter myself you will find, a very good substitute for the *Victory*. Captain Thomas,² an old officer of great activity, who has been very roughly treated in the service of his country, will take her out to you, and we mean that he should bring home the *St. George*. Captain Peard had better bring home the *Victory*, as he is rather too young a captain to continue commanding a three-decker as a private ship.³ Captain Dacres

¹ See *post*, p. 376, note.

² The name is doubtful, but probably Capt. John Thomas, a veteran of the American War, who took post in 1779 and in 1781 was severely wounded in action with a French frigate.

³ Capt. Shulldham Peard had been Sir Hyde Parker's flag-captain in the *St. George* and when commanding her as a private ship had run her on the *Cachopos* coming out of Lisbon in January, 1797.

will succeed Admiral Frederick in the *Blenheim*, and the *Barfleur* will I suppose be Admiral Nelson's flag-ship, unless he should go into the *Britannia* and Parker take the *Barfleur*. Admiral Thompson will I suppose be in the *Prince George*, as she was fitted out for him ; and Captain Foley, who would by this arrangement be thrown adrift, may be provided with a ship by the vacancy which will be occasioned by Admiral Nelson's captain, who we here suppose is likely to be Captain Miller.¹ If the above disposition should not appear to you to be liable to any objections, it is that which seems to the Board the most advisable.

I must refer you to the public letters for any more details. The arrangement for the ships which are to remain with you will, I think, leave you a sufficient force for the present state of things on the coast of Portugal and its environs ; and in sending home those frigates which are not to make part of it, it might not be amiss if you were to direct one or two of them to look into Ferrol on their way, that they may bring us certain intelligence of what there is there. We have heard reports from vessels spoken with at sea of a squadron of eight sail-of-the-line, but these agree so little with what we had before heard, that we are very desirous to know the truth from good authority. Before I conclude, I must beg leave to mention to you a young man, the son of a very intimate friend of mine, Mr. Purvis, M.P. for Northamptonshire, who is now on board the *Niger* frigate, and was lately in a very precarious state of health. I shall be much obliged to you, in case Captain Foote [writes] to you that he is in a situation to require it, if you would give him

¹ Capt. Thomas Foley had been commanding the *Britannia* (100) as Vice-Admiral Charles Thompson's flag-captain.

permission to go on shore a little while at Lisbon. His friends at home are very uneasy about him, but I believe the young man himself is extremely unwilling to quit his ship, being very fond of the service, though as yet he has been but a short time in it.

Believe me [&c.],
SPENCER.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

5th March, 1797.

My Lord,—

Besides the objects stated in my public letter, for detaching Commodore Nelson, such an active measure cannot fail of an effect on Spain, where the people are in the extreme of discontent, and it inspires this timid court with confidence.¹ I wish with all my heart, the whole ministry was formed of men like Dom Rodrigo de Souza, for there is stuff in the lower orders, which only wants a good government to call it into action.

I have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful
and obedient servant,
J. JERVIS.

Victory, in the Tagus. 5th March, 1797.
(Received 5th April. Private.)

¹ On this day, Jervis, while repairing damages in the Tagus, had detached Nelson with a division of three of the line to cruise between Cape St. Vincent and the African coast with a view to intercepting the Viceroy of Mexico who, with three of the line, was coming home to Cadiz with treasure. From a letter of Nelson's it would seem that there was some hope this measure would force the Spanish fleet to sea again. Mahan, *Life of Nelson*, i. 286.

GRENVILLE TO SPENCER

Cleveland Row. 15th March, 1797.

My dear Lord,—I receive so many and such pressing representations about the possibility of our having a fleet (at least of frigates) in the Mediterranean to co-operate with the Austrian army in the next campaign, that I am under the necessity of begging you to take the subject into serious consideration. Considering how much both Toulon and Cartagena are now exhausted, I should hope that while Jervis effectually watches Cadiz, a very inconsiderable force, perhaps one seventy-four and four or five frigates, might completely answer the object, and a very effectual one it would be.¹ Among the letters I have received this morning there is one from Graham² in which he expresses a very decided opinion that without some such co-operation the campaign is impracticable on the side of the Austrians. Eden's³ letters and Starhemburg's notes are full of the same subject, and I have hitherto evaded giving any answer, but I can no longer do so. By a few words from Mr. G. Elliot,⁴ whom I saw at St. James's, I perceive that he had had some conversation with Jervis on this subject, and that the latter

¹ For Spencer's instructions on this, see *post*, p. 380.

² Possibly Colonel Grahame (afterwards General Lord Lynedoch), who, disguised as a peasant, carried to the Austrian headquarters from Mantua (29th December to 4th January) news that the place was at the last extremity for want of provisions.

³ Sir Morten Eden was British Minister in Vienna, Count de Starhemburg Austrian Minister in London. On these demands from Austria, see *ante*, p. 365.

⁴ Gilbert Elliot, after the evacuation of Corsica, had gone to Naples and thence home, speaking Jervis on the way and being present at the battle of St. Vincent. He did not land in England till 15th March. The Mr. G. Elliot referred to is probably one of his sons, Gilbert or George.

had conceived the idea of employing Nelson on this service if authorised from home. I know the demand there is for ships in all quarters, but I hardly conceive a more important service than this, after providing for the immediate defence of our own coast.

Ever most truly yours,
G.

[*Endorsed* : From Lord Grenville. Private.]

JERVIS TO SPENCER

20th March, 1797.

My Lord,—I fear the return of Lieutenant Willoughby to England will have been a great disappointment to Lord Middleton and your lordship; but the rapid decline of young men in this squadron, whether from ill-treated venereal complaints or the climate, is inconceivable. Two in whom I had a great interest have gone off lately. Lieutenant Middleton, who is of a certain age, has been ashore ill ever since the *St. George* took the ground on the *Cachopos*,¹ and I understand is almost done. I will, however, promote him in the first vacancy; and Mr. Bowen, who has joined in the *Comet*, will fill the second, if Mr. Burdett² is promoted on occasion of the action of the 14th February. I am very happy to learn your lordship has applied so effectual a plaster to the wound of Lieutenant Bowen of the *Terpsichore*, who by the information of his brother has the use of his hand, but the shoulder-joint still continues in the same helpless state.³ I hope, however, that time and

¹ MS. 'Catchops.'

² Lieut. George Burdett, 'First' of the *Egmont*, received his promotion.

³ For the *Terpsichore's* remarkable action with *Santissima Trinidad* on 2nd March, see *James*, ii. 57.

proper applications will restore it in some degree. I understand that difficulties are made about giving Admiralty commissions to the two young men who were appointed flag-lieutenants to Vice-Admiral Thompson, and Rear-Admiral Parker—one of them, the son of Lord Newark, and very deserving, as is the other. I wish to be informed from the office what vacancies it is permitted for me to fill up, and yet I do not like to state the subject to the Board, lest I should be suspected of contending for patronage, which is by no means the case. At the same time your lordship will perceive how great a discouragement it is to the young men of the squadron to receive from their agents the sort of answer they obtain in reply to solicitations for commissions, in consequence of my acting orders, which probably are exaggerated with a view to stimulate me to make representations. The experience I have had of your goodness upon these occasions assures me your lordship will pardon the liberty I take in occupying so much of your time, which the exigencies of the moment require for more important objects. But the expected reinforcement not appearing, I flatter myself that an addition is made, so as to relieve the *Britannia* and other ships so long coppered, which will enable me to take bolder measures than I dare hazard with such incumbrances.

I have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful

and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, in the *Tagus*.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

23rd March, 1797.

My Lord,—The *St. George* being put into tolerable repair, and the service requiring that I should lose no time in covering the supplies destined for Gibraltar, and protecting the garrison of Porto Ferrajo,¹ in the passage hither, I feel it absolutely necessary to take her with me ; and should Sir Robert Calder join before both those measures are effected, it is my intention to detach Rear-Admiral Nelson, with two or three line-of-battle ships, to meet Captain Freemantle, when I am apprised of his route, which I conclude will happen soon after we reach our rendezvous between Cape Spartel and Cadiz. I therefore hope your lordship will not think I trespass unnecessarily upon the arrangement of the Board to have the *St. George* sent to England immediately ; the less so as she and the *Britannia* may escort the Spanish prizes, and furnish men sufficient to navigate them on our return after performing the very important operations in contemplation. Sir Charles Lindsay and Lord Mark Kerr take their passage home in the *Packet*, the former on account of the recent death of his father and the succession of a large fortune, which requires his presence, and the latter, because I am alarmed for his health, which is very delicate, and his zeal and ardour so great, that the work and confinement on board the *San Ysidro* would be

¹ On the evacuation of Corsica in 1796 the garrison had retired to Porto Ferrajo in Elba. About Christmas time Nelson had been sent to bring it away, when it was decided to evacuate the Mediterranean, but General de Burgh, having received no orders to leave, felt bound to stay where he was. A serious effort had now to be made to withdraw him and his troops. Nelson, who was already urging that he should be detached to fetch them, was sent on the service on 12th April.

too much for him. I propose placing Captain Hamilton in the San Josef, and Lieutenant Proby in the San Ysidro, which will make room for Captain Caulfield (displaced from the Fortune by the Admiralty arrangement) in the Peterel, for Lieutenant Middleton in the Comet, and for Lieutenant Lee in the Camel vice Caulfield. By this means all your lordship's recommendations for commands, except Lieutenant Bowen, will be complied with.

Lord Mark Kerr is so delightful a youth that I hope he will not long continue idle, and if Lord Hugh Seymour does not take him under his command, you will oblige me much by sending him back to me. Captain Middleton,¹ who carries Admiral Waldegrave to England, is an officer I am very sorry to part with, and I shall be glad to see him again, his ship only wanting new copper and a refit.

I beg leave to repeat my thanks for the regard and attention I have received from your lordship, and to assure you of the true respect and esteem with which I have the honour to be,

Your lordship's most faithful
and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, in the Tagus.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

29th March, 1797.

My Lord,—Poor Sir Charles Knowles is so feeble, that the very first night he received the

¹ Capt. Robert Gambier Middleton of the Flora (36) was a nephew of Lord Barham's—son of his elder brother. In May, 1798, he justified St. Vincent's good opinion by cutting out a French corvette from under the batteries of Cerigo.

Britannia from Captain Foley, the ship's company took the command from him, and have been in a state of licentiousness ever since ; Captain Marsh, who now commands her, in consequence of an application from Sir Charles Knowles to retire on account of his health, is I understand a firm man, and likely soon to recover the good order and discipline which Captain Foley had by steady perseverance established.

.

General Stuart has communicated some intelligence from the northern frontier of Portugal, received this morning, which puts me much at ease, respecting any immediate operations on that side, there not being the smallest preparations.¹

General Mazarredo, considered as the best sea officer in Spain, who refused to command the fleet when Don Juan Langara was made Minister of Marine and was sent to Ferrol in a sort of exile on that account, set out for Madrid on the 17th instant ; but it is generally believed he will [persist in (?)] declining to serve, unless very material, probably impracticable, changes are made. In the meanwhile Gravina is doing all in his power to equip the fleet. We are detained by the removal of the stores from the ships lately arrived from England, and the completion of the water of the Irresistible and Orion, just come from Commodore Nelson, who has been, and still is, cruising off the south coast of Portugal.² I hope, however, to sail in a few days, with intention to present myself before Cadiz, and to facilitate the objects stated in a former letter.

¹ Major-General Hon. Chas. Stuart, the captor of Corsica, had been employed since December, 1796, in organising the defence of Portugal against the threatened French invasion.

² For the object of the cruise see *ante*, p. 372, *note*.

I find it necessary to go into the *Ville de Paris*, as she will by that means be sooner in a state for service than she otherwise would, and Captain Sotherby will command the *Victory*, unless Rear-Admiral Nelson wishes to hoist his flag on board of her on joining. I learn from Captain Calder that your lordship has a two-deck ship in contemplation for him [Nelson] which he prefers; the *Gibraltar* is not active enough for the purpose.

A French cartel with Portuguese prisoners is this moment come in, eleven days from Brest; and an intelligent captain of a Brazilian reports that there were not more than fourteen line-of-battle ships in any state of forwardness, and that much desertion had taken place, and a general aversion to invasion shewed by all the persons employed there, both by sea and land, and a tumultuous joy expressed by all, on hearing of the defeat of the Spanish fleet.

I have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful

and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, in the Tagus.

SPENCER TO JERVIS

3rd April, 1797.

Dear Sir,—The present state of affairs, as affecting the situation of the naval war in the part of the world where you command, makes it necessary for me to call your attention to two or three objects in particular, all of which have

very probably, long before this will reach you, offered themselves to your consideration, but which I feel notwithstanding that I ought to mention.

If a naval war alone was the sole object to which we have now to look, we might undoubtedly rest very well satisfied in having got ourselves clear of the Mediterranean as well as we have done, and be contented with being in a situation to keep the Spanish fleet in pretty good order, and with preventing them from coming to the northward to form a junction with the French at Brest. But as it is most essential in the actual state of Europe, that we should enable our ally, the Emperor of Germany, to act with as much vigour as possible against the French, and it being of the utmost consequence towards this object that the Adriatic should be cleared while the Austrian forces are making their push in Italy, it becomes incumbent on us to co-operate with them in the only manner now remaining open to us, by sending a squadron into that sea.¹ You will best be able to judge what the proper strength of such a squadron should be, and we shall therefore leave that entirely to your discretion; but you will easily conceive from the season that no time is to be lost in undertaking this service; and though it is one of great difficulty, I have so high an opinion of the activity and abilities of several of the officers under your orders, that I have no doubt of their being able to put in execution whatever operations of this sort may be entrusted to them in a very satisfactory manner. The letter you will receive from Nepean mentions only frigates, but it is not meant to confine you to

¹ This proposal was too late. Preliminaries of the peace of Campo Formio were signed at Leoben on 18th April.

that class of ships, if from any particular reason you should judge it more expedient to send any two-deckers as part of such a squadron. If you had a larger number of ships-of-the-line¹ I suppose you would naturally enough look to Admiral Nelson for this purpose, and possibly detach some under him. I fear that in the present state of the force at Brest we shall scarce be able to make up your number to thirty sail, which in a former letter some time ago I had led you to expect ; but I hope we may make it twenty-five early in the summer, and in the course of the year may relieve some of your worst ships by sending out fresh ones. With such a force (even if the Spaniards should not detach) I trust we may feel secure ; but unless they mean to leave all their distant possessions and trade almost entirely unprotected, I think they cannot fail to send out some detachment, which if it should escape without interruption, will at least so diminish the force that remains as to set you very much at your ease upon it. The destruction of their squadron at Trinidad has been of great service in this point of view,² and I cannot help being almost sanguine enough to hope that the necessity this will lay them under of sending something out may possibly draw them into another action with you.

There is one other point on which, though one of very great delicacy, I feel it my duty to say a few words to you at the present juncture, and that is the possible event (whether probable or not you are as likely to judge as I can be) of Portugal

¹ Since the reinforcement from home had arrived, he had twenty-one of the line against the Spanish twenty-six in Cadiz. Jervis believed them to be thirty or forty.

² See *ante*, p. 143, note 2.

making peace with France, one condition of which would necessarily be our exclusion from their ports. This, if it were to happen, would be an event which would throw an immense difficulty upon our naval war, and it is well worth considering what could be done in such a case. The subject is such a one that I have not ventured to mention it to any one here, and I am therefore hazarding a very absurd suggestion, perhaps, in what I am going to throw out for your consideration ; but it has occurred to me, that it might be practicable, if we were to be excluded from the Portuguese ports, to occupy the anchorage belonging to Vigo in such a way at least as to make it a tolerable rendezvous for our fleet in such a case of necessity. A small force of troops would, I suppose, be sufficient to occupy and maintain themselves in the islands at the mouth of that bay ; and if by that means a good anchorage for the fleet could be secured, it might be no very bad substitute for the Tagus, though of course in point of supplies not at all to be compared to it.

I thought it necessary to mention the several subjects alluded to in this letter, though I am sure they have already occurred to you, and you have very probably formed a more correct judgment on them than it is possible for me here to do. You will immediately perceive how well they deserve your full consideration, and I shall be very happy to receive by some early opportunity your sentiments upon them.

You will, I hope, excuse my mentioning to you a very few officers who have been strongly recommended to me,

I have now fatigued you with so long a letter that the best thing I can do will be to release you at once from it, by repeating the assurance of the

respect and esteem with which I have the honour to be,

Dear Sir,

Your very faithful and
obedient humble servant,

SPENCER.

P.S.—I enclose a letter I have received from a man of whom I know nothing at all, but as it contains some information which may possibly be of use, I think it right you should be put in possession of it.

SPENCER TO JERVIS

6th April, 1797.

Dear Sir,—I have this morning received your letters of the 15th ultimo, and take the chance of overtaking the *Lively* in order to send you a line on the subject of part of one of them, which I shall not fail to lay before his Majesty to-morrow and take his pleasure upon it. But in the meantime I think it right to take the very first moment to suggest to you that I am convinced that it will be impossible to comply with your wishes with respect to the title of *Yarmouth*, that title being already borne by the Marquis of Hertford and his eldest son being called by it; and though there have been a few instances in which two persons have received the same title, yet I am sure from some circumstances which have happened to come to my knowledge lately that his Majesty does not approve of that being the case again.

I take this opportunity likewise of informing you, with a reference to my letter of the 3rd instant,

that it will be necessary to give the officer commanding whatever squadron you may judge it proper to send into the Mediterranean for the purposes therein mentioned the strictest caution on the subject of penetrating too far up the Adriatic till he shall have received information of the state of things about Trieste, the dispatches this morning received from that part of the world having informed us that the Austrians have been obliged, till they shall be reinforced as they expect, to make a considerable retrograde movement, which I am not without great apprehension may enable the enemy to get possession of Trieste itself.

I will take another opportunity of answering the other parts of your letter which may require it, having now no more time than to subscribe myself with great truth and respect,

Your very obedient humble servant,

SPENCER.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

6th April, 1797.

My Lord,—In acknowledging your lordship's letters of the 19th and 21st February and 1st March, I want words to express the sense I feel of the representations you must have made to his Majesty to have produced so high a mark of the royal favour, which I will endeavour to merit, by a firm perseverance in the same line of conduct.

The Britannia is such an impediment to the movements of the squadron that I intend to trespass upon the arrangement of the Board, by sending her home instead of the Victory, as she will go through the summer months without much danger to her gallant crew ; and to encourage them,

I will continue in her until the moment of her being ordered to England. Sir Charles Knowles, who is totally incompetent (and the Goliath of no use whatever under his command), has made a proposal to change with Captain Foley, and of course I shall accede to it. The St. George and Captain are very unfit to be continued, the former, though patched up, having suffered considerable injury by being ashore on the Cachopos, and the latter by the shock of two sharp actions, and long service, and with the Egmont should be relieved as soon as the exigencies of the service will permit. I therefore conclude Captain Thomas will prefer going into the Captain (until I can provide better for him), to removing Captain Peard from the St. George for a short period, and Commodore now Rear-Admiral Nelson will hoist his flag on board the Ville de Paris, Admiral Parker having made his election for the Barfleur; but should Captain Thomas ambition the command of the St. George, he shall be appointed to her.

By the very great exertions of Commissioner Coffin¹ and the means furnished by the Minister of Marine, I hope the whole squadron will be ready for sea in ten days, when I shall immediately proceed off Cadiz, trusting that the armament at Brest, if destined for Vigo with a view to penetrate Portugal by the northern frontier, as suspected here, will be taken care of by the Western Squadron.

I have directed Captain Stirling to look into Ferrol on his way to England, and am about to place Captain Tyler's squadron of frigates (off Cape Finisterre) to watch the movements at

¹ Capt. Isaac Coffin, R.N., was established at Lisbon as Navy Commissioner, on the same footing as the regular Commissioners of Dockyards.

that port and Vigo, and to look out for anything coming from Brest.¹ I cannot account for the eight sail-of-the-line reported to have been seen standing to the southward, which I rather imagine were ships belonging to the Caracca Company going from St. Sebastian to Cadiz to join the convoy, or perhaps to the West Indies.

Captain Foote assures me Mr. Purvis is quite recovered, and his father will I hope soon have the happiness of seeing him in perfect health. Exclusive of the interest your lordship takes in his welfare, my respect for the character of the Member for Northamptonshire would have prompted me to shew him every attention in my power.

I cannot close this letter without again noticing the merit of Commissioner Coffin in pushing forward the great repairs and shifting of masts, in which he has been ably assisted by the master shipwright, who is a very capable man, and the indefatigable zeal of Captain Troubridge is above all praise. Upon the whole I do not believe the squadron could have been put in a state for service in the same space at Spithead.

I have the honour to be, with the truest respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful

and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Victory, in the Tagus. 15th March, 1797.
(Received 6th April, 1797. Private.)

¹ Capt. Stirling, formerly of the *Diadem*, was now in *L'Aigle* (38). The arrangement mentioned should be noted, since later on in the war the Finisterre station was occupied for the Western or Channel Squadron.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

[Ville de Paris] 6th April, 1797.

My Lord,—I thank you very much for this noble ship, which feels like a rock after the trembling, leaky Victory, for the step of a man from the poop ladder to the quarter deck made her whole stern frame shake, and I fear she is not improved in this respect by having been on board some ship, and carried away her starboard quarter galley. How the accident happened I have yet to learn. Rear-Admiral Nelson preferring the Captain, Captain Sotherby continues in command of her, [*i.e.* the Victory] though I very much wish to place him in a two-deck ship, he having neither nerves nor experience for so great a charge ; in zeal he abounds.

.

I am sure Mr. Churchill, the master shipwright at Lisbon, will not disgrace any situation you may think fit to place him in, at home or abroad. I hope soon to receive accounts from Lieutenant-General De Burgh and Captain Freemantle. Should the convention Mr. Wyndham was negotiating with the French Minister at Florence have been agreed upon, they ought to be near at hand, and I have placed Captain Oakes and the squadron of frigates under his orders accordingly. Mr. Walpole¹ writes that Mazarredo has obtained his terms, and is coming to Cadiz with positive orders to give us battle when his fleet is ready. Your lordship may rely upon our giving him a very early opportunity the moment he is without the

¹ Mr. Robert Walpole, British Minister at Lisbon.

protection of the batteries, and I have the honour
to be, with true respect and esteem,

Your very faithful and

obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Ville de Paris, off Cadiz.

SPENCER TO JERVIS

13th April, 1797.

Dear Sir,—I have received your letters of the 22nd and 23rd of March by Admiral Frederick, the former of which I immediately laid before his Majesty, and have his Majesty's commands to acquaint you that it will be impossible for him to consent to your taking the title of Earl of Yarmouth, that title being already borne by the Marquis of Hertford, whose eldest son is commonly called by it. I am very sorry that this circumstance should throw any delays in the way of your well-earned dignity being officially announced ; and I am not without hopes that when you have seen Sir Robert Calder, you may not think it unadvisable to concur in the hint I desired him to give you, that many of your friends here were desirous of your choosing the title of Earl of St. Vincent, and that I may hear from you accordingly ; in which case your other titles might be Viscount and Baron Jervis, which is not at all unusual, and of which his Majesty has authorised me to say he would approve. If I should not hear from you on this subject again before this reaches you, I must beg you will be so good as to write upon it as soon as you can, as it will be necessary to delay the steps for your peerage till this point is settled. In the latter part of your letter you

mention chains and medals, on which his Majesty has also commanded me to say that it is not his intention to direct that chains should be worn with the medals in question, but ribbands in the manner which you will find prescribed in the directions which I have the honour to send you with the medals by the *Lively*. I am sorry that I inadvertently sent Admiral Frederick's medal with the rest, but I shall be obliged to you to take the earliest safe opportunity of sending it back again ; the portion of narrow ribband belonging to him need not be sent, as that can be easily procured here, and there will by that means be a larger quantity to divide among the other captains.

I now come to your letter of the 15th ultimo, which I had omitted to answer in mine of the 6th instant. You will have learnt from Sir Robert Calder, that the arrangement you have made about Sir Charles Knowles and Captain Foley is exactly what had occurred to us here, and the other arrangement about ships though they vary a little from what we talked over here, will not meet with any difficulty from hence ; I only regret that Captain Sotherby will, as I perceive, be by them placed in the *Captain*, which ship is likely to come home soon ; however, I am in hopes you may have some opportunity of removing him into a better ship hereafter if he should conduct himself to your satisfaction. The exertions you have all made in the refittal of the fleet at Lisbon have great merit indeed, and give a very strong proof in addition to the many others we have had from you, of what energy and activity can produce when well directed. I have only to say, in answer to your letter of the 23rd, that under the circumstances, and the intelligence you have stated to us, I am very glad that you have been

enabled to determine on retaining the *Britannia* and *St. George* for a short time longer ; and if the character of Admiral Mazarredo, who is said to be destined for the command of the Spanish fleet, be such as he has been represented to me, I do not despair of his affording you an opportunity of giving him the same sort of lesson you have given his predecessor, Don Cardova. I am sorry that such active young officers as Sir Charles Lindsay and Lord Mark Kerr should on any account be thrown out of service at this time, and I shall feel very much at a loss how to find employment for them here ; as all the frigates we have coming forward are nearly engaged, and the town of London, as well as Portsmouth and Plymouth, swarm with young captains who on every account ought to be employed, but whom I am, for want of ships for them, under the necessity with great regret to keep in idleness. By the arrangement of frigates made before Sir Robert Calder left us, the *Flora* will be to remain here, and that class of ship is so much wanted in these seas at present, that I fear it will not be possible to spare you any more for some time to come.

Since my letter of the 6th the news has reached us, which I then only expected, of the French being in possession of Trieste. On the subject upon which that bears, I have only to add to what I have before said, that it must rest with your discretion what instructions to give to the officer who may be employed in it ; and indeed that discretion must be extended over to the point of whether any such plan should for the present be undertaken at all. I am extremely obliged to you for your attention to all my numerous recommendations, and I trust you will not think me unreasonable (when you consider

my situation here as to applications of that sort) if I continue to keep up my list. I have now only to mention the name of one young officer, but he is so respectably connected that I cannot avoid bringing him forward to your notice. I mean Lieutenant Henry Heathcote, son of Sir William, the Member for Hants; his father is so anxious about him that it will give me great satisfaction to hear that he is of the sort which you are not unwilling to favour.

Believe me, dear Sir, with great truth,

Your very faithful and

obedient humble servant,

SPENCER.

Admiralty.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

19th April, 1797.

My Lord,—I am much concerned that the pleasure of the Board respecting the employment of a squadron of frigates in the Adriatic did not reach me before. I had made the arrangement required by their lordships' orders of the 8th March, to reduce the number by sending certain ships named therein to England, which is in part complied with. This, and the necessity I was under to detach Rear-Admiral Nelson with a squadron of line-of-battle ships and frigates to protect the garrison of Porto Ferrajo down the Mediterranean from any attempt of the enemy at Toulon or Cartagena, put me under very great difficulty, touching the execution of their lordships' orders. However I have sent the Joseph cutter to Lisbon to stop the Pallas, and as soon as she joins,

I will make up a squadron of frigates for this service. Line-of-battle ships are totally out of the question, there being between thirty and forty sail-of-the-line in Cadiz, thirty of them in preparation, and the utmost vigour using by Admiral Mazarredo to equip and man them, he having authority to draft the regiments in garrison to complete their complements; and as he has received the most accurate accounts of my force from Monsieur Porlier, the Spanish Chargé at Lisbon, who is very active in transmitting intelligence, it is the more necessary I should be on my guard, nothing being so dangerous as holding an enemy too cheap, and there can be no doubt the Spanish fleet is much better commanded than when I met it last. With thirty ships-of-the-line in good condition, and not less, I should be able to make a detachment. Your lordship must be sensible a few supernumerary ships are necessary in order to get the fleet watered alternately; otherwise I should be under the necessity of going into port frequently, by which means the plan of operations before Cadiz would be totally frustrated. The enemy might get their supplies out to the colonies, and their fleet by a circuitous move reach Brest, *malgré* any efforts to prevent it. I therefore cannot part with the Britannia, bad as she is as a clog to the fleet, until she is replaced. The St. George does much better than I expected, and will serve during the summer months exceedingly well. The event your Lordship alludes to, as likely to shut us out of the Tagus, I apprehend is at no great distance. We may certainly avail ourselves of the anchorage in the entrance of Vigo during the summer months, but it is too remote from this scene to be of any material use (Gibraltar being so much more *à portée*) and supplies even of water

very doubtful. I never was within the islands, therefore cannot write with precision on the subject.

I have not been unmindful of the corn-trade between the S.W. coast of Barbary and Cadiz ; the *Thalia* and *Meleager* cruised some time in that quarter and performed good service. Many vessels laden for the Cadiz market were wrecked in a gale of wind at Mogadore during the blockade, some were captured, and others driven ashore in chase and lost. The *Andromache* is now employed on that service ; in short I have missed no point without the Straits mouth ; and if the frigates had been all left with me, the supplies to Malaga, Cartagena and Alicante from the Bey of Mascara's territory would have been equally interrupted.¹ The Gibraltar privateers have done a little. I have studied the red book so little that I really did not know the title of Yarmouth had been taken in the promotion of Lord Hertford to the marquissate, or I should not have presumed to name it. The title of Oxford is, I believe, open by the death of the late venerable Earl. My friends in the fleet and at home are anxious that I should name St. Vincent for the earldom, but I dread being charged with arrogance. May I therefore request your lordship will lay me at his Majesty's feet, and humbly submit the whole to his gracious pleasure. Captain Cumming is a meritorious officer, and I shall be glad of an opportunity to give him the rank of post-captain ; Captain Elphinstone of the *Speedy* stands before him, not only for his services about Corsica, Porto Ferrajo, and the coast of Italy, but that he is a child of the service, being the son of an old captain, and the brother-in-law of Commissioner Hartwell ; and though neither of these

¹ Mascara is the western part of Algeria.

persons had much public character in the profession, I feel it a duty to take care of the offspring and near connections of my brother officers. Young Gage is very deserving and serves in a good school; Pierrepont and Heathcote (the latter a relation of mine) are promising youths, and of good families. Mr. Lewis Davis I have already promoted, and he is confirmed. Mr. Joliffe and Mr. Pridham shall be taken care of, as soon as the Inconstant and Blanche join. I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect,

Your lordship's most obedient
humble servant,

J. JERVIS.

P.S.—I omitted to mention Mr. Charles Herbert who is now first lieutenant of *El Corso* to gain experience, of which he is void; he has a good disposition, but an utter dislike and inattention to the service. I will nevertheless provide for him, as he stands on your lordship's list.

Ville de Paris, off Cadiz.

JERVIS TO SPENCER.

27th April, 1797.

My Lord,—Captain Devonshire, who will have the honour to present you with this letter, is in love with the late Naval Officer's daughter at Gibraltar, a very bad party for him;¹ and as he is a good fellow, I have stopped him short in his passage to the Rock, and have to request of your lordship

¹ The technical meaning of Naval Officer at this time was an Admiralty official in charge of an oversea dockyard or establishment. The approximate equivalent now would be 'Naval Storekeeper.' See *Mariner's Mirror*, vol. iv. p. 250.

to send him to the East or West Indies, to consume his flame.

I have had some correspondence with Don Joseph Mazarredo, who writes like an officer and a man conversant in public business, and he certainly has brought his ships fast forward since his arrival at Cadiz, and I conclude will be at sea in ten days or a fortnight. Captain Hope is charged with the co-operation in the Adriatic, and has under his orders the *Romulus*, *Thalia*, *Andromache* and *Meleager*, all remarkably well manned, and the three first named ably commanded; the last not ill, Captain Ogle only wanting a little more steadiness. I have given Captain Hope a letter to Rear-Admiral Nelson, desiring he will add the *Speedy* sloop and *Roehind* armed cutter to his squadron, which will then be very complete. Hope is not inferior to the Captains Tyler and Freemantle in ability. Should your lordship wish an old officer to command in that sea, Captain Blankett is well formed for it, and possesses great influence at the Court of Naples.

I am not competent to decide whether taking possession of the Island of Teneriffe would be of much importance in this stage of the war. With the troops coming from Port Ferrajo, and what might be furnished from the squadron, the enterprise is practicable.

I have the honour to be, with respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful

and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Ville de Paris, off Cadiz.

The *Pallas* unfortunately sailed the day before the *Joseph* cutter arrived at Lisbon.

J. J.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

29th April, 1797.

My Lord,—By one of those unaccountable prepossessions which occur in the most active warfare, the Spanish frigates *Ninfa* and [*Santa*] *Elena* were taken for two Venetian frigates, which we saw coming out of Cadiz. The former was captured, and Captain Calder was so positive the name of the ship which led was the same as a Venetian we had seen at Gibraltar, that at half-past two in the morning they were suffered to pass in very light water within pistol shot of the *Ville de Paris* and another ship of the squadron unmolested; by which we lost the chance of acquiring half a million of money they are said to have put on board fishing boats soon after the daylight in the morning, with an equestrian statue of the King in gold.¹ I say the chance, because *La Ninfa* sails much faster than any ship of the squadron, and Captain Martin² is of opinion that neither of them would have been taken had they steadily employed the means of escape. I never saw anything better conducted than the pursuit was by the *Irresistible* and *Emerald* [36], the latter commanded by Captain Waller, Captain Berkeley being sick ashore at Lisbon with two or three chronic complaints, any one of which is sufficient to carry him to his grave.

The frigates under the orders of Captain Tyler, which cruise for the protection of the trade on the north-west side of Portugal, and the brigs

¹ See Brenton, vol. iii. p. 408.

² Capt. George Martin of the *Irresistible* (74). The *Ninfa* was taken into the service as the *Hamadryad* (36).

off Oporto Bar, have been very successful in picking up the enemy's privateers. Captain Morris of the *Boston* is very active.

Believe me to be, with the greatest truth,
Your lordship's very faithful
and obedient servant,
J. JERVIS.

Ville de Paris, off Cadiz.

Our intelligence from American vessels imports that Don Joseph Mazarredo will give us battle between the 7th and 15th of May.

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Wimbledon. Thursday Evening.

My dear Lord,—I gave Mr. Huskisson directions before leaving town this evening to prepare the drafts of the different dispatches in consequence of the discussions of last night. But in respect to the troops intended for Portugal, I desired him, before finally preparing them, to call upon you and to model his instructions according to the idea you may entertain as to Sir John Jervis making any attempt on Cadiz. If the troops can be supposed of any consequence with regard to that object, the instructions to be sent to the troops must be subservient to that view.¹ The

¹ These troops were the old Corsica garrison which were just arriving at Gibraltar from Porto Ferrajo. The Directory for some time had been trying to force Portugal, under threat of invasion, to close her ports to British ships, and on her appeal for assistance Dundas at the end of 1797 decided to send these troops to General Stuart at Lisbon. *Fortescue*, iv. 601, and see next note.

best preservation of Ireland would be the destruction of the Spanish fleet.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

HENRY DUNDAS.

[*Endorsed* : Private. 4th May, 1797. Received 5th. Answered in conversation.]

SPENCER TO JERVIS

4th May, 1797.

Dear Sir,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 29th March and 6th April, and hope soon again to hear from you a satisfactory account of the arrival of Captain Freemantle and his squadron.¹ I am much afraid that notwithstanding the orders Mazarredo is said to have received, he will not give you a good opportunity of meeting him, unless indeed he expects some ships home, which might make it absolutely necessary for him to come out. I was very sorry to hear that there had been any such disposition as you mention on board the *Britannia*. You will have heard from Nepean what sad work of that kind we have had here. I hope and trust that it is now all over, but you are too well acquainted with the service not to be convinced, with me and every one else, I believe, who thinks of it, that the consequences of what has passed must necessarily be highly prejudicial to the discipline of the navy. It is right you should be apprised that some of the first petitions that were sent purported to come from three of the ships now with you, but I have

¹ Nelson met Freemantle and the *Porto Ferrajo* transports on April 21st, sixty miles west of Corsica, and escorted them to Gibraltar early in May.

much doubt whether they did or no, the Audacious, the Bellerophon and the Theseus. The extraordinary part of the business is the secrecy with which it was conducted ; not an officer in the whole Channel fleet appears to have had a suspicion of anything of the kind having been in agitation, and yet when the mutiny broke out at Spithead there had evidently been much concert and communication among the several ships. I have very little doubt that the vigilance and attention of the officers under your command will not suffer any such proceedings to take place ; and I hope that the very liberal encouragement which has been granted (though the occasion on which it was immediately granted was so unpleasant) will upon the whole (especially among those who are untainted with the mischief) produce a good effect. The wages were undoubtedly too low in proportion to the times, and though in point of provisions, I believe, the sailor had as ample an allowance as his own consumption required, I am surprised that the purser's deduction, and the system of short weights and measures depending on it, should have been so long tolerated ; it does not, so far as we can discover, appear to have been originally authorised by any order, but to have been established by long custom.

The augmentation to the Marines was a very delicate question, as it was more likely than any other to affect the army. The consideration induced the adoption of the mode of augmentation we have made use of, being nothing more than what in the case of the army embarked on board ship is already allowed to them.

This business has certainly originated from the admission of some mischievous plotting persons (either among the county quota men, or perhaps

some of the Irish Defenders) into the fleet. It would not be amiss to discover if there are any of such description on board any particular ships, and if there are the officers should be careful to watch their operations.

The plan pursued in the mutiny at Portsmouth as well as at Plymouth appears to have been more systematical than one would naturally expect from the common sailor, and I am confident from what I observed of the proceedings that it was but a very small part indeed of the men who took the lead; the rest followed, many of them most unwillingly.

I am, dear Sir, with great truth,

Your very obedient,

humble servant,

SPENCER.

Admiralty.

JERVIS TO SPENCER

5th May, 1797.

My Lord.—By the fall of Trieste, and the consequent loss of the Emperor's valuable provinces on the borders of the Adriatic, the measure of the misapplication of the naval force in the Mediterranean the summer before last is full. Had the squadron resorted to Vado Bay, instead of Leghorn, and vigorous measures been pursued, the enemy never would have frustrated Piedmont coastwise. In truth the war might have been carried into the enemy's country as General de Vins¹ proposed, but the miserable *crapule*² which occupied the minds of the chief and another flag-officer, whose character is mistaken, occasioned

¹ General de Vins commanded the Austrian army on the Riviera, while Hotham was commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean.

² MS. 'crapeule.' The word means 'debauch.'

these direful effects. I have greatly to lament your lordship did not dispatch me (or some other active officer) the moment the vote of the House of Commons passed exculpating the commanders of the West India expedition.¹

Indeed, my Lord, you lower the character of your commander-in chief, and damp the ardour of the officers under him, by thus limiting the patronage. This service is unlike every other. We have no relaxation in port, where we never go without positive necessity; the officers are all kept to their duty; no sleeping ashore, or rambling about the country; and when at sea we do not make snug for the night, as in the Western Squadron, but are working incessantly by the lead to keep our position, insomuch both mind and body are continually upon the stretch.

Your lordship's very faithful
and obedient servant,
J. JERVIS.

Ville de Paris, off Cadiz.²

JERVIS TO SPENCER

12th May, 1797.

My Lord,—I am very glad of an early opportunity to obey your lordship's commands in the

¹ In 1795, on the return of Jervis and Sir Chas. Grey from their brilliant campaign in the West Indies, a vote of censure upon them was moved in the House of Commons for having levied a contribution on the colonists in Martinique. Dundas moved an amendment justifying their action and expressing the thanks of the House for their services, and the amendment was carried. But for this Jervis would have gone out to the Mediterranean in the spring, and he is probably right in thinking his presence in lieu of Hotham might have led to a profound modification of the whole war.

² St. Vincent had been cruising before Cadiz since 4th April.

when the peace comes, I trust you will abolish the system of guard-ships, which have sown the seeds of all these ills, and are a perfect nuisance. The port admiral, for there always should be one at Portsmouth and Plymouth in time of peace, may hoist his flag on [*sic*] the hulk, or on board a frigate, as the French have done.

The Bellerophon and Audacious do their business well; the former is well officered and appointed, and I have put two able lieutenants into the latter lately. The Theseus is an abomination; the first lieutenant put Lieutenant Connolly into close confinement the other day without justifiable cause, while his captain was ship visiting, and he has since been tried and acquitted by the judgment of a court martial. If I can prevail on Captain Aylmer to go into the Captain, Rear-Admiral Nelson and Captain Miller will soon put the Theseus to rights. I hope your lordship will not think it presumption in me to name Captain Troubridge to you, as the ablest adviser and best executive officer in his Majesty's naval service, with honour and courage bright as his sword. I enclose a sketch of the position we were in when the Spanish admiral passed us in the Cartel from Trinidad. We changed it yesterday, having found the ground foul where the northernmost ships were anchored.

I have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful

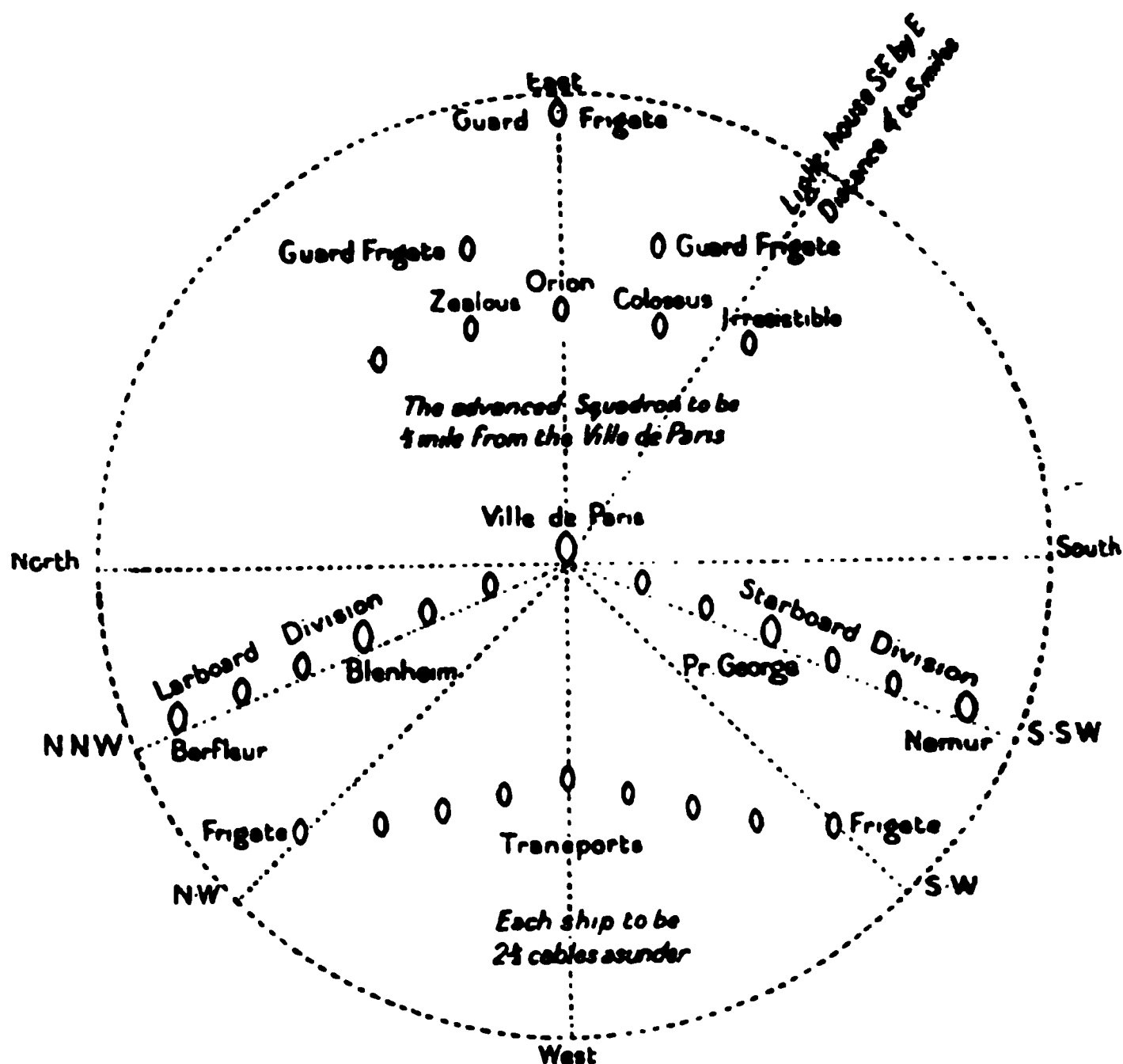
and obedient servant,

ST. VINCENT.

Ville de Paris, in Rota Bay.¹

¹ He had anchored the fleet in Rota Bay on 19th May, in order strictly to enforce the commercial blockade which he had declared on 11th April.

ENCLOSURE

*Disposition of the Anchorage of the Fleet off
Cadiz the 18th of May, 1797*

ROBERT CALDER.

NOTE—All the ships named in the line of battle were three-deckers.

ST. VINCENT TO SPENCER

26th May, 1797.

My Lord,—The Nuestra Señora del Rosario having very civilly presented herself to us without the exchange of a shot, it would be a breach of

gallantry not to add her to his Majesty's calendar. I have therefore directed Commissioner Inglefield to give the necessary orders for the survey, &c., and I shall appoint Lieutenant Charles Herbert to the command of her.¹

I understand two surgeons of the Royal George have been lately provided for at the instance of Admiral Lord Bridport. I hope Dr. Wier will not be forgot.

General O'Hara out of spirits has applied for an addition of naval force, and I have put the Hamadryad and Rosario under the orders of Captain Bowen, which, with the Terpsichore and new Transfer, will I trust effectually perform all the services required for the garrison.

I have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful
and obedient servant,
ST. VINCENT.

Ville de Paris, in Rota Bay.

ST. VINCENT TO SPENCER

15th June, 1797.

My Lord,—The Admiralty Board has surely been very inconsiderate at this critical period to attend to the representations of the Navy Board against the valuation of our prize line-of-battle ships, which I believe to be a very reasonable one. The two first-rates will, I am persuaded, be found worth more than six French line-of-battle ships.² The Deputy-Comptroller is paying

¹ The N. S. de Rosario (20) was taken off Cadiz on May 20th by the Romulus (36) and Mahonesa (34); and added to the navy as the Rosario.

² This is the highest estimate at present known of the relative value of three-deckers as compared with ordinary ships-of-the-line.

his court to the Treasury at the expense of his profession, and, what is worse, hazarding a seditious movement in the only part of his Majesty's fleet to be relied on. I wish he was Commissioner of Chatham Yard, and Captain Troubridge in his place. The Western Squadron under Lord Bridport will, I conclude, anchor in the Bay of Brest, when the wind is easterly; otherwise De Galles will give him the slip, and either take post at Vigo, or come upon me, whilst I am at least one third inferior to the Spanish fleet in the Bay of Cadiz.¹

I have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful
and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.²

Ville de Paris, at anchor off Rota Bay.

I enclose an omitted letter from Rear-Admiral Nelson. On the movements it alludes to, my opinion is that the Spanish fleet has changed its position on hearing that a bomb-ketch is preparing at Gibraltar to bombard the town, and had the fleet continued in the former anchorage, they would have come in for a share.

J. J.

ENCLOSURE

Nelson to St. Vincent

13th June, 1797.

My dear Sir,—What the intentions of the Dons are I know not, but their movements

¹ Vice-Admiral Morard de Galles was commander-in-chief of the Brest squadron.

² It will be observed that Jervis had not yet got used to signing by his new title.

would assure me, if English, that they are on the eve of coming out. We see that thirteen sail-of-the-line are unmoored and hove short. I saw Gravina cut his anchor, and they did it briskly, but the accommodation ladder of his ship was not in at sunset. The signals which they have been making this day are not their usual harbour signals.

I will give them credit for their alertness. If they come out in the morning, this squadron have their bulkheads down and in perfect readiness for battle, and to weigh, cut or slip as the occasion may require. I have given out a line-of-battle, myself to lead, and you may rest assured that I will make a vigorous attack upon them the moment their noses are outside the Diamond. Pray do not send me another ship, for they may have an idea of attacking this squadron; and if you send any more they may believe we are prepared and know of their intention. It will, Sir, be my pride to show the world that your praises of my former conduct have not been unworthily bestowed. A Moorish boat came out this morning under odd circumstances, not answering the description you sent me; but I will relate her conduct and leave you to form a judgment. A boat with one mast and sail loaded with empty casks stood out for the squadron. When she came within gun-shot or nearly so, a boat was sent to her, but so soon as the boat put off, she down sail, wore, and made sail for the harbour; hoisted a small red flag, some say it was Spanish, and would not stop for our boat. The conduct was odd. For what could she stand direct for our squadron and then return?

Believe me ever, my dear Sir,

Your most affectionate and faithful,

HORATIO NELSON.

SPENCER TO ST. VINCENT

1st July. 1

My dear Lord,—I am ashamed to see have no less than the eleven following letters acknowledge from your lordship, all received I last wrote to you. My apology for not answering them sooner must be the very great press of business, attended by a considerable degree of anxiety, which the late occurrences in our squadrons have occasioned to me; and I am happy to find by your last letters that the under your lordship's command is free from material symptoms of a like description.

Your letters which have reached me are of the 13th, 14th, 19th, 27th and 29th of April, the 5th, 12th, 16th, 22nd (two in number) 26th of May.

The delay above alluded to will render unnecessary for me now to enter into many observations contained in the former part of your lordship's letters. I lament as much as you do, I assure you, that you were not sent much sooner, and if I had not understood Mr. Dundas that you could not have been prevailed upon to go out till the affair was perfectly settled in Parliament respecting the complaints of West India merchants, I should certainly have proposed it to you before I did.

I am rather surprised to find in your letter of the 5th May a complaint of my restraining your patronage. I really believe that very few commanders-in-chief in the annals of the Admiralty have had greater latitude allowed them in respect than those who have been employed at the different foreign stations since I have been

the Board ; and I am sure that I have always wished to shew your lordship as much attention in this way as possible. I am aware that I have sent you many recommendations, but whenever you have shewn your disposition to distinguish an officer by giving him an acting order, I have always endeavoured, when the arrangements came home, to forward your wishes by giving new commissions except in those cases of new made lieutenants, whose certificates are not sent. Why there have been so many of those I know not, because the rule about it is sufficiently known in the service to prevent those gentlemen from neglecting to comply with it in an instance which concerns them so nearly, and the reason of the rule is sufficiently strong to make the Admiralty very tenacious of it. Mr. Nisbet,¹ whom you mention in one of your letters early in April, is now in that predicament, as a new commission is ordered for him, but it cannot be made out till it appears here that he has passed for a lieutenant.

Sir Charles Thompson is not destined for the Leeward Islands at present, but if the war should last into the winter, it may be possible to make some new arrangements respecting flag-officers ; and I am much too well aware of your title to have such persons under you as will make your command pleasant not to be very desirous to take any hint on this subject, whenever it may be in my power to act upon it.

Believe me, my dear Lord, with great truth,
Your very faithful and
obedient humble servant,
SPENCER.

¹ Probably Nelson's stepson, Josiah Nisbet.

ST. VINCENT TO SPENCER

9th July, 1797.

My Lord,—The court martial on the mutineers of the *St. George* did not finish before sunset yesterday, or they would have been executed last night. The most daring and profligate of them confessed to the clergyman who attended him that the plan had been in contemplation six months, in concert with the *Britannia*, *Captain*, *Diadem* and *Egmont*. The latter is so highly disciplined and commanded that it would not have succeeded there. Had Sir Charles Knowles continued in the *Britannia*, her myrmidons would have gone the whole length. All the prisoners disavowed any correspondence with the ships in England. I hope I shall not be censured by the Bench of Bishops, as I have been by Vice-Admiral Thompson, for profaning the Sabbath. The criminals asked five days to prepare, in which they would have hatched five hundred treasons. Besides that, we are provoking the Spanish fleet to come out, by every means in our power, and seven and twenty gun and mortar boats did actually advance, dastardly enough it must be confessed, and cannonade the advanced squadron (now composed of ten sail-of-the-line), on seeing twenty barges and pinnaces go to attend the execution of the sentence.

I have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful

and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Ville de Paris, at anchor off Rota.

ST. VINCENT TO SPENCER

9th July, 1797.

My Lord,—I gave you a pretty broad hint some time ago that the removal of Vice-Admiral Thompson from the post he holds in this fleet would be very desirable. I am now to request that it may take place immediately, or that I may be relieved; and I do entreat that no more admirals are sent hither.

I send a draught of one of the mortar boats, captured from the enemy. Rear-Admiral Nelson reports her to be the worst of the two.¹ Such vessels would be very useful for the defence of Spithead, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Southampton and other ports of the Kingdom which have rivers and arms of the sea contiguous to them.

I have the honour to be,

Your lordship's very faithful

and obedient servant,

J. JERVIS.

Ville de Paris, at anchor off Rota.

SPENCER TO ST. VINCENT

12th July, 1797.

My dear Lord,—By refusing to allow the commander at Lisbon to draw bills for the two-thirds of the valuation on your prizes, you have counteracted our intention of shewing the same sort of attention to your action as was shewn to Lord Howe on the 1st of June, 1794, in which

¹ On 3rd to 4th July a bombardment of Cadiz harbour had taken place under Nelson, who had the inshore squadron. At its conclusion the Spanish flotilla attempted to capture the bomb-ketch *Thunder*, and an action took place with the British fleet flotilla, led in person by Nelson. In the course of it two Spanish mortar boats were captured.

instance a sum less considerable than the valuation was ordered to be immediately tributed till a regular survey could be made of captured ships. It does not appear by the report of the Navy Board to the Admiralty on this subject that it was by any means intended by them to strike off one-third of the valuation of prizes ; but thinking that valuation too high, they considered the age of the ships and other circumstances contained in the description of them, they meant to reserve their own valuation till they should have an opportunity of surveying them by their own people, and in the meanwhile only two-thirds on account to be paid to the captors.

I do not know on what ground you lay your proceeding at the door of the Deputy Comptroller in particular ; all I know of it is that it was proposed to me by the Comptroller, and I concurred in it, thinking it right to pay you the same compensation as was done to Lord Howe on a former occasion.

You are the best judge how far it will be right to wait till the ships arrive here and are valued by the Navy Board before any part of the money is paid for, but I should think it would be much more advisable on the very ground you mention to allow the commander to draw as he was directed to do.

Lord Bridport has not anchored with his fleet at Brest, but I hope notwithstanding that your ship will not run any chance of being molested by Monsieur de Galles.

I thank you much for the communication of Sir Horatio Nelson's letter, which is very characteristic of him. I am, however, still incredulous about the Spaniards venturing out.

¹ According to Duro they had no intention of doing more than were only concerned with defending the port and ships from a *coup de main*.

We have promoted Lieutenants Day and Hardy, upon your lordship's recommendation, and I am always happy to have such good opportunities of backing your testimony in favour of meritorious officers.

I have the honour to be, my dear Lord,
Your very faithful humble servant,
SPENCER.

ST. VINCENT TO SPENCER

SECRET.

Ville de Paris, at anchor before Cadiz.

3rd August, 1797.

My Lord,—When the failure of the Gournier mortar made it necessary to send the Thunder Bomb to Gibraltar,¹ I detached Rear-Admiral Nelson with the Theseus, Culloden, Zealous, Leander, Sea-horse, Emerald, Terpsichore, Fox cutter, and Cacafuego mortar-boat against Santa Cruz in the island of Teneriffe upon a well-grounded hope of success, but not with the intention to keep possession of the island. The Rear-Admiral separated from us in hazy weather on July 15th.

ST. VINCENT.

ST. VINCENT TO SPENCER

Ville de Paris, at anchor before Cadiz.

16th August, 1797.

My Lord,—I have the happiness to acquaint you that Rear-Admiral Nelson has joined with his squadron and in such health that nothing

¹ The meaning seems to be that he decided on the Santa Cruz raid only when he found it impossible to proceed with the attack on the fleet in Cadiz.

could prevent his coming on board the *Ville de Paris*. He dined with me and I have very good ground of hope that he will be restored to the service of his king and country.¹

I have the honour [&c.],
ST. VINCENT.

ST. VINCENT TO NELSON

PRIVATE.

Ville de Paris, at anchor off Rota.
16th August, 1797.

My Lord,—Secrecy being the soul of enterprise I am sure your lordship will forgive me for not giving your earlier advice of the expedition under Rear-Admiral Nelson than by the *Argus* lugger. My mind labours under too much anguish to enter into details upon the subject. I send by Mr. Yawkins a sketch of the bay of Santa Cruz with remarks, and a journal by Captain Waller who is an ingenious naval man. It appears by this sketch that several new works have been lately thrown up.

Lieutenant Gibson² has left an only daughter the darling of his heart, who lives at or near Hastings, and if your lordship will have the goodness to lay his services before the King I am persuaded his Majesty will be graciously pleased to reward them by granting a pension to her.³

It has been my fate during this war to lose

¹ His right arm had been amputated off Santa Cruz on 25 July.

² Lieut.-Commander John Gibson commanding the *Frisco* cutter, which was sunk with nearly all hands at almost the first shot.

³ He afterwards found and told Lord Spencer that Mr. Gibson had 'an ample fortune.'

the officers most dear to me ; by that of poor Bowen I am quite unmanned.¹

The two letters of latest date from Rear-Admiral Nelson are written with his left hand, after the amputation of his right arm.²

I have the honour [&c.],
ST. VINCENT.

SPENCER TO ST. VINCENT

MOST SECRET AND PRIVATE.

Admiralty, 18th August, 1797.

My dear Lord,—I told you the event which some months ago I thought there was reason to expect has now taken place, but in a manner and at a moment in which I confess I did not expect it.

The Portuguese Minister at Paris,³ who has always been very much inclined to the French interest, has taken on himself to sign a separate treaty of peace with the French Republic, to which, if a judgment can be formed by all the most recent communications we have received from his court, he can by no means have been authorised ; but having concluded it, your lordship will readily perceive that it will not be an easy matter to prevent the court of Lisbon from ratifying the

¹ Capt. Richard Bowen of the *Terpsichore* was killed at Santa Cruz. In a later letter St. Vincent speaks of him as one 'whose brilliant services far surpass those of any other captain in H.M. Navy.' For Nelson's opinion see *James*, ii. 68.

² For these letters, dated 24th, 27th, and 28th July, see *Nicolas*, ii. 421, 424, and vii. ccxxvi.*

³ Mons. de Aranjó. At the end of 1796 Lord Grenville had formally asked for his recall, as he would not support Lord Malmesbury. *Dropmore Papers*, iii. 282.

I have no objection to any number of admirals your lordship may think fit to employ in the fleet provided they are firm¹ men and obedient officers. The examples I have experienced to the contrary make me shudder.¹ I believe Sir John Orde to be of the sort above described, although I never served with him. Both he and Frederick will be acceptable, but should the war continue over the winter I beg Admiral Nelson may be sent to me.

I have [&c.],
ST. VINCENT.

ST. VINCENT TO SPENCER

Ville de Paris, before Cadiz.

19th September, 1797.

My Lord,—It is my intention to order Captain Collingwood to wear a distinguishing pennant when he takes charge of the larboard division of the fleet, as he will do the moment Vice-Admiral Thompson is out of sight.

I cannot describe how much my mind is relieved by the dispatch of the crazy and captured ships for I have been haunted by the wrecks of Sir Geo. Pococke's and Lord Rodney's ships, Dutch as well as French and Spanish, which were lost after their great achievements by hazarding them across the Atlantic in the recent tempestuous winter months.

I have [&c.],
ST. VINCENT.

[*Minuted*: Own receipt and I am very glad that the prizes and disabled ships have arrived in safety.]

¹ To his request that no more flag-officers should be sent (*ante*, p. 411) Lord Spencer had replied that the request was too late, as he had already appointed Orde and Frederick.

ST. VINCENT TO SPENCER

PRIVATE AND SECRET.

Ville de Paris, within the Tagus.

21st November, 1797.¹

My Lord,—Soon after the departure of Corso with Mons. Pinto's messenger, it occurred to me that the despatches he carried might have relation to the ratification of the preliminaries of peace agreed upon by Mons. Aranda and that probably the mission of the Comte de Pombeiro had the same for its object, and I communicated these suggestions to General Stuart who agreed with me in the propriety of urging Mr. Walpole to obtain from Mons. Pinto some explanation on the subject, which to do him justice he readily undertook. But before I could carry it into execution, the Prince Adolphus's packet, and Flora, armed cutter, arrived with the despatches. On Sunday night I went to Madame Pinto's assembly and inquiring from her of Mons. Pinto's health she replied with great rapture 'Oh! he is quite well and in delightful spirits and you know why?'² I of course profess ignorance, although it is evident that the compliance of our Government with the ardent wishes of this court had performed the miracle, for Mons.

¹ At the end of September, on the hint apparent in Lord Spencer's secret letter of 18th August, St. Vincent had sailed into the Tagus in person, leaving Collingwood with a division to watch Cadiz. His presence at Lisbon appears to have had much to do with the delay of the Portuguese in ratifying the treaty with France, on the ground that it permitted only British vessels to be in port together.

² Writing in December, 1791, from Berlin to Grenville, Morton Eden says: 'A new actress is now appearing with influence is very great. It is a Madame de Pinto, sister of Madame de Lucchesini. If she can retain her power over her lover, General Bischoffswerder, she may possibly pave the way to his rising.' *Dropmore Papers*, ii. 246.

Pinto has been more wretched ever since my return to the Tagus than can be described. Mr. Walpole has since informed the general and me that Mons. Pinto entered very readily into the explanation and confirmed all other conjectures, adding that peace was absolutely necessary for Portugal, and we have every reason to believe that the preliminaries will be ratified *in toto*. . . .

Having long foreseen the event, I have about 5000 tons of transports ready, and on the arrival of the squadron under the orders of Commodore Collingwood I shall be able to clear victuallers to the amount of between 2000 and 3000 tons, which, now we are relieved from horses, will enable us to convey the troops, artillery, camp equipage and stores wherever they may be destined, and I naturally conclude I shall receive instructions on this head.

. . . Every river and creek in the kingdom will be filled with privateers and the British trade harassed and obstructed to such a degree that no one will insure upon it. This is an unpleasant description, but I should fail in my duty to the public and to your lordship if I withheld it from you.

I have [&c.],
ST. VINCENT.

SPENCER TO ST. VINCENT

PRIVATE AND SECRET.

Admiralty. 4th December, 1797.

My Lord,—I received yesterday your lordship's letter of the 20th ultimo marked *private and secret*, and am much concerned to find . . . it is highly probable, notwithstanding the very haughty manner in which the Directory have

the preliminary treaty made by Mons. Aranjó on account of the specified time being elapsed, but are ready to enter into a new one the moment he is furnished with powers. I believe they have also signified that several articles which will bear very hard on our commerce with Portugal will be introduced into the new treaty. . . .

I have [&c.],
ST. VINCENT.

ST. VINCENT TO SPENCER

PRIVATE.

Ville de Paris, within the Tagus.
30th December, 1797.

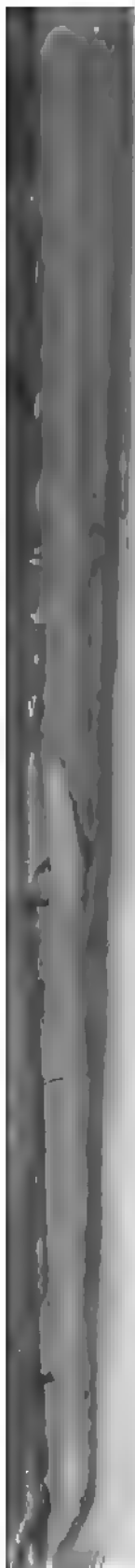
My Lord,—A violent inflammation in my eyes and head compels me to make use of the pen of my secretary. . . .

I understand this court looks for an account of the final adjustment of its peace with France about January 10. In the meanwhile no measure whatever is taken to provide against a reverse; all is languor and indifference.

A sufficient tonnage of transports is ready for the embarkation of the troops. . . .

From the transactions at Cadiz it appears the Court of Madrid acts on the presumption that when we cease to have a refuge in the Tagus, the fleet will be ordered to England, and the expectation of that event is the cause of their not having attempted to send out reinforcements and supplies to their West Indian Colonies which stand very much in need of both.

I have [&c.],
ST. VINCENT.



PART VII

MEDITERRANEAN PAPERS

1798

THE REOCCUPATION, WITH THE BATTLE OF THE NILE AND
THE CAPTURE OF MINORCA



INTRODUCTORY NOTE

DURING the early part of 1798 St. Vincent, as will be seen by his first letter, was still occupied with the question of how to maintain his position if Portugal gave way. But the note of his correspondence with Lord Spencer soon changes, for Pitt was already at work with a scheme for foiling the French plans. Within a few months of the Treaty of Campo Formio he was at work again upon a new coalition which would force France to turn her eyes away from the ocean.

The difficulties were very great, for at that time our relations with Austria, on whose attitude everything turned, were far from cordial, and she did not cease to complain that our withdrawal from the Mediterranean had ruined her Italian campaign. At the outset, it became obvious that there was nothing to hope either from her or Russia unless we could send a fleet up the Straits. This then from April onwards becomes the burning question. In view of the precarious situation at Lisbon such a movement required almost superhuman energy and courage. Lord Spencer apologised to Lord St. Vincent for even opening the question, but as he said, 'the appearance of a British squadron in the Mediterranean is a condition on which the fate of Europe may at this moment be stated to depend,' and there is nothing which better justifies the great reputation of St. Vincent as an admiral and a statesman than that, exhausted as he was with a long and dispiriting spell of service, he frankly accepted the risk, with all its difficulties and dangers staring him in the face. His courageous assumption of the responsibility made possible the impossible, and it was

Pitt's announcement to Austria, Russia, and Naples that a fleet would be sent, that opened the way for the formation of the Second Coalition.

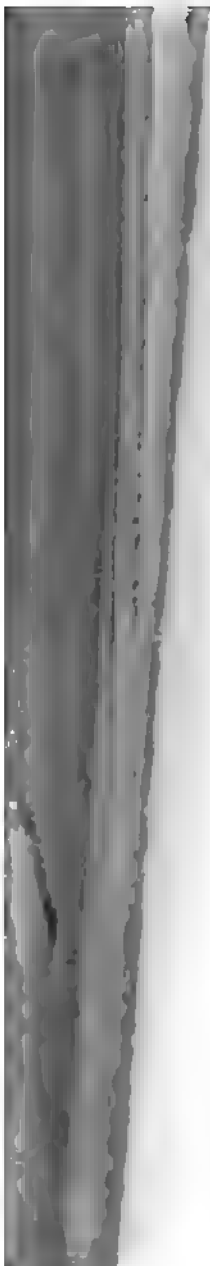
The immediate object of the move, however, was to deal with the French armament that was preparing to leave Toulon and various Italian ports. Its objective was unknown, but it was believed to be Portugal or possibly Ireland. At this time there was no suspicion as to Egypt. The method of operation was left to St. Vincent's discretion. He was given a free hand as to whether he would take his whole fleet in or risk detaching a division only; but at the same time the extreme importance of maintaining his present position was pointed out to him, if by any means or reasonable risk it could be done without sacrificing the Mediterranean movement.

With apparently no hesitation, St. Vincent decided to accept the full risk of dividing his fleet in order to secure the double object. On the assumption that this would be his choice, Nelson, it will be seen, had been named by Spencer as the officer to whom the Mediterranean detachment should be entrusted. There can be no doubt that St. Vincent cordially endorsed the selection, though it meant that to all his other troubles was added the exasperation of the behaviour of his senior flag-officers, who, ignorant that Nelson had been named from home, considered the Commander-in-Chief had insulted them by his appointment.

The story of what came of this heroic dividing of the fleet is the story of Bonaparte's adventure in Egypt and the victory of the Nile. The renown of that battle and the outburst of rejoicing with which it made Europe ring from end to end, can hardly now be realised, except in the anxious correspondence of Grenville and Dundas with Spencer while the fate of Europe, and, as it seemed, of India, hung in the balance. It is unfortunately too voluminous and too political for publication in full by the Society, but it is hoped that enough has been given to shew how tensely the nerves of Europe were vibrating till after the first tidings that Nelson had failed it was known that a British fleet was once more in command of the Mediterranean. If for a time the young Admiral

head was turned, as his best and most admiring friends thought, who can blame him ? He deserved all the adulation he received, but that is no reason why we should forget what is due to the two men whose just discrimination and fearless resolution made the victory possible.

Never perhaps was so clearly illustrated how with our fleet alone we could influence a Continental situation. During the autumn the whole scene was changed. Instead of the Tagus being closed to us, a Portuguese squadron was assisting us to blockade Malta ; Russia was sending another from the Black Sea ; St. Vincent's clever arrangements to snatch Minorca from the Spaniards had given us the base we needed in the Western Mediterranean ; and so far as the sea was concerned, all was ready for a vigorous renewal of the war. For a time indeed everything promised success. At the end of the year England, Russia, Turkey, Portugal and Naples were in league against France, and the Second Coalition was in sight.



ST. VINCENT TO SPENCER

PRIVATE AND SECRET.

10th January, 1798.

My Lord,—I am honoured with duplicates of your lordship's letters of the 4th December, by El Corso ; the original not come to hand.

Your lordship does me justice in believing that my mind has been constantly occupied since the month of June, at which period this court determined to make peace, in looking for means to provide for the fleet I have the honour to command, which I feel to compose a very considerable portion of the defence of the Empire, and to employ it advantageously after the Tagus ceases to be a depôt for the stores and provisions necessary for its support. At Gibraltar there is no security for either, and to deposit them there would invite a bombardment, in the event of which they must be destroyed. The anchorage within the Zaffarina¹ Islands is, I believe, secure, and by throwing up fieldworks on the islands might be defended ; but there is neither water, cattle, or any kind of refreshment to be found there, and the distance so great from Cadiz (the scene of action) that the Spanish fleet would be uncontrolled whenever the squadron should be compelled to repair thither on any occasion. In truth, there is the same objection to Gibraltar ; for though a fleet

¹ See *ante*, p. 211.

can with the utmost facility put to sea from Cadiz in moderate weather with any wind, it requires a Levanter to get into the ocean from Gibraltar ; and I have frequently experienced six weeks of westerly wind, and no possibility for a single ship to pass the Straits. To take post on the Bayona Islands before Vigo would be to have another Gibraltar to attend to, and the supply of the troops with cattle, &c., would require greater resources and exertions than your lordship can possibly be aware of, or indeed any one who has not been employed in a co-operation with troops. Besides, the situation is still more remote from Cadiz, and during the spring and summer months, when the northerly winds are prevalent, it is quite a voyage from the latter to the former. There is no port on the coast of Portugal, except the Tagus, which will admit even a large sloop of war. I conclude the French had an eye to Lagos Bay, in stipulating that only three ships should be admitted in the smaller ports. Under all the afore-mentioned circumstances, I cannot advise the continuance of the fleet in these seas, because the public will be led to expect what cannot be performed, and with every possible exertion the preservation of the health of the crews, nay, even the maintenance of them, is very doubtful.

In respect to an active squadron taking a range round the Mediterranean, I do not perceive any great obstacle. It must have occurred to your lordship that the smallest infraction of treaty by Sardinia, Tuscany, or Naples would be immediately followed by the French army in Italy (which is very considerable) taking possession of those countries, and I do not foresee the advantage that would be derived from the enterprise of a squadron so employed. If it is clogged with a convoy, the

operation would be difficult, and I am of opinion there is no security for British navigation in any part of the Mediterranean, Adriatic, Morea, or Archipelago, where everything is at the mercy of France. The trade carried on by the enemy in his own bottoms, from all the information I have received, is not an object for the employment of such a squadron, which however may become necessary if the Dey of Algiers does not alter his tone. I consider the Bey of Tunis to be governed entirely by him.

It will be advisable to station four frigates and two sloops for the protection of the trade between Cape Finisterre and Lisbon, the two sloops to relieve each other off the bar of Oporto, and one frigate to be always near the rock of Lisbon, as the coast between it and the entrance of the Tagus will be continually infested with privateers, and no remedy to be expected against their depredations by application to the Court of Portugal, the pusillanimity of which beggars all description.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,
Your very faithful and
obedient servant,
ST. VINCENT.

Ville de Paris, within the Tagus. 10th January, 1798.
(Received 29th January, 1798.)

[*Endorsed by Lord Spencer, 4th February: Owned receipt of his and the letters of 22nd and 30th December last. I was well aware of the difficulties he has sketched and am much embarrassed on what plan to determine in the event of the peace being made. You will see by the official letter of this date that that event is probably not so near as we imagined, and in fact one in which our best way will be to preserve the same plan on which we have hitherto worked.*]

SPENCER TO ST. VINCENT

PRIVATE.

30th March, 1798.

My dear Lord,—I am very happy to send you Sir Horatio Nelson again, not only because I believe I cannot send you a more zealous, active, and approved officer, but because I have reason to believe that his being under your command will be agreeable to your wishes. If your lordship is as desirous to have him with you as he is to be with you, I am sure the arrangement must be perfectly satisfactory.¹

I am very sorry to hear that the anxiety necessarily attendant on the critical situation in which you are placed has had any unpleasant effect upon your health. The very unaccountable conduct of the Court of Portugal most certainly adds considerable difficulty to the carrying on of any operations which might otherwise be suggested by the present state of the war, and what their future conduct may be appears so uncertain that it is next to impossible to give from hence any precise instructions on the subject. It must evidently be right to maintain our situation on the coast of Portugal and in the neighbourhood of the Cadiz fleet as long as we are able, and continue to seize any opportunity of disabling the force of Spain, which sooner or later must, I suppose, fall more completely than it even now is into the hands of France.

Whatever suggestions your lordship may have

¹ After losing his arm at Teneriffe, Nelson, on 20th August, 1797, had gone home on sick leave. On 14th March he attended a levée to take leave of the King, before hoisting his flag to rejoin in the Vanguard (Capt. Berry). He did not get clear away from St. Helens till 10th April.

to make on these topics will be received by me with great satisfaction, and as far as our means can allow, according to the circumstances of the war nearer home, I shall be happy to act upon them. In the meantime, I am well convinced by experience that everything which zeal, ability and activity can effect will infallibly be produced by your exertions.

I have the honour to be, my dear Lord,
Your very sincere humble servant,
SPENCER.

Admiralty. 30th March, 1798.

SPENCER TO LORD GRENVILLE

6th April, 1798.

My dear Lord,—I send you by Mr. Pitt's desire a sketch I have made out of answers to the queries he put down upon paper yesterday in Downing Street. The result is to my mind a decision which I fear will not tally very well with our wishes and the views you have formed as to the ground work of the communication at present proposed with Vienna.

The statement I make of our force disposable for the two stations in question (the Home and the Mediterranean) is carried as high as possible, even under the supposition of a Russian auxiliary squadron in the North Sea ; and yet it falls short of the number of ships which appears to be absolutely requisite for our purpose on the system of keeping a squadron in the Mediterranean. For that purpose we should have at least seventy sail, as the Channel cannot be trusted with safety with less than thirty-five (including the coast of Ireland), and the remaining thirty-five would be

but barely enough to watch Cadiz and command the Mediterranean.

Our best plan appears to me to be to maintain as long as we can our position between Lisbon and Cadiz, and when we are excluded (which I conclude we soon shall be) from the Tagus, to send Lord St. Vincent with the fleet he now has to sweep round the Mediterranean and do all the mischief he can to the French navy there ; and if in the meantime the Spanish fleet should come northward, I think the fleet we have at home, undiminished by any further detachment, will (if well managed) be fully competent to encounter the force which might by that means be combined in these seas against us ; while on the other hand, if the Spaniards should push into the Mediterranean after us, though they would be superior in number, especially should they effect a junction with the French Mediterranean force, I should not apprehend much danger from so ill-combined and ill-conducted a force, especially when opposed to Lord St. Vincent's fleet, which I consider as being the best formed to act together that perhaps ever existed.

If you think that any use could be made of such a movement of our fleet without stipulating for its remaining in the Mediterranean, I do not see that there would be much objection to holding out the expectation of it ; but I cannot bring myself to making it stationary there, because, exclusive of the great expense, it would leave the Spaniards too much at liberty.

Believe me, my dear Lord,

Yours very sincerely,

SPENCER.

Admiralty. 6th April, 1798. 11 P.M.

ENCLOSURE

6th April, 1798.

*Queries**Answers*

1. Can a fleet be stationed, victualled and refitted in the ports belonging to the kingdom of Naples?

There are means to a certain degree of stationing the fleet in different divisions in the Bay of Naples, of Baiæ, and of Messina. The latter station, however, is very difficult to get out of in certain winds.

The fleet might be supplied with fresh meat, bread and wine, and probably many other smaller articles of victuals, but the salted provisions must come from home.

2. What is the extra expense of maintaining a fleet in the Mediterranean?

I have not procured materials for giving an answer to this question with any degree of precision, but from the circumstances above stated it must be very considerable.

3. Is it possible (in the present state and distribution of our force)

I think it is impossible, not so much on account of the want of

Queries

to allot seventy sail-of-the-line to the two great fleets for the Channel and the Mediterranean ?

Answers

ships, as of seamen to man them.

The state of ships disposable for these two stations is as follows :—

	L.-of-B. 64's	
Channel.	27	2
Coast of Ireland	4	1
Mediterranean	24	—
Preparing and may be manned when ready for sea	3	1
	58	4

In addition to the above (making in all sixty-two sail) there are eight more coming forward and which might be ready for sea in about three months' time, if there were men for them ; but as there is already a deficiency of about 1000 men on the home station, and the eight ships above mentioned would require 5000 more (most of them being, of a very large class), the number could not be made up to seventy without an augmentation of at least 6000 men, of which there is not the least prospect.

*Queries**Answers*

4. What is the Venetian and Neapolitan force ?

The Neapolitans have four sail-of-the-line and six or seven frigates.

The Venetian fleet (now in the hands of France) consists of six sail-of-the-line (three of which are very bad indeed) and about three frigates.

5. What is the French force in the Mediterranean ?

The French have six sail-of-the-line at Corfu and three at Toulon ; the former ready for sea but weakly manned, the latter nearly ready. There are one or two ships more getting ready at Toulon, but there seems little prospect of their being able to equip more than ten sail-of-the-line in the whole from that port.

SPENCER TO ST. VINCENT

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

29th April, 1798.

My dear Lord,—You will by the present conveyance receive a letter from Nepean preparing you for orders to act upon a plan of operations very different from what we have hitherto adopted, and which I have no doubt will appear to be

but in case of finding them still in port, the appearance of such a force cannot fail to check their proceedings, and the circumstance of a British fleet being in the Mediterranean will encourage the Austrians to act, and most probably divert the French force to a different destination from their present one.

It is proposed to be left to your lordship's determination whether this purpose should be obtained by a detachment from your fleet or by taking your whole force into the Mediterranean. At the same time I cannot help suggesting that it would be extremely desirable not to lose sight of the great advantage which has hitherto been obtained from the constant check which you have kept on the Spanish fleet at Cadiz. If, however, it is necessary to make a choice between the two objects, in the present state of things the preference is wished to be given to the defeat of the purpose (whatever it may be) of the Toulon armament ; but we are inclined to hope that you may find it practicable to send a detachment into the Mediterranean sufficiently strong to attain that end, and at the same time remain in a situation to watch with effect the fleet at Cadiz, till by reinforcements we can again put you in a state to block that port in the manner you have before done. If you determine to send a detachment into the Mediterranean, I think it almost unnecessary to suggest to you the propriety of putting it under the command of Sir H. Nelson, whose acquaintance with that part of the world, as well as his activity and disposition, seem to qualify him in a peculiar manner for that service. We shall take care to send you out ships which are the best suited for foreign service of any which we have to dispose of, in order to make your fleet as effective as possible,

and I trust that the first division of the reinforcements intended for you will reach you so soon as not to have given time to the enemy to combine any measures in consequence of this new disposition of our force.

In case of your preferring to enter the Mediterranean with the whole force now under your orders, you will readily perceive how highly essential it is that the earliest notice of your determination should reach us ; and that orders to return to England should also as soon as possible be sent to the reinforcement which we shall have sent out to you, because by this movement we shall be exposed to the Spanish force from Cadiz, coming northward either to join the fleet at Brest, or to make a direct attack on Ireland, and it will of course be necessary to have as large a force collected here as we conveniently can.

I am as strongly impressed, as I have no doubt your Lordship will be, of the hazardous nature of the measure which we now have in contemplation ; but I cannot at the same time help feeling how much depends upon its success, and how absolutely necessary it is at this time to run some risk in order if possible to bring about a new system of affairs in Europe, which shall save us all from being overrun by the exorbitant power of France. In this view of the subject it is impossible not to perceive how much depends on the exertions of the great Continental Powers, and without entering further into what relates more particularly to them, I can venture to assure you that no good will be obtained from them if some such measure as that now in contemplation is not immediately adopted. On the other hand, if by our appearance in the Mediterranean we can encourage Austria to come forward again, it is in

the highest degree probable that the other Powers will seize the opportunity of acting at the same time, and such a general concert be established as shall soon bring this great contest to a termination on grounds less unfavourable by many degrees to the parties concerned than appeared likely a short time since.

I have thought it necessary to enter into this reasoning on this occasion, to impress your lordship with the great urgency and importance of the measure which has now been determined upon, and to justify our calling upon you to place yourself (at least for a short time) in a situation of more difficulty than any less pressing emergency would warrant us in doing.

Yours [&c.],
SPENCER.

The Earl of St. Vincent.

(Duplicate, sent in a letter dated 1st May for Sir Roger Curtis to take.)

(Duplicate, in a letter dated 2nd May by the cutter.)

ST. VINCENT TO SPENCER

PRIVATE.

1st May, 1798.

My Lord,—I do assure your lordship that the arrival of Admiral Nelson has given me new life.¹ You could not have gratified me more than in sending him. His presence in the Mediterranean is so very essential that I mean to put the Orion and Alexander under his command, with the addition of three or four frigates, and to send him away (the moment the Vanguard has delivered her water to the in-shore squadron) to endeavour to ascertain the real object of the preparations making

¹ He had rejoined off Cadiz the previous day.

by the French, which Captain Day, who is an intelligent man, seems positive is intended against Ireland.¹

Captain Downman I found in the Victory ; he was recommended to me by Lord Hugh Seymour, and has proved himself worthy his protection, and it is with great pleasure I can assure you that the present nine lieutenants of the Ville de Paris are men capable of filling any situation.

With your lordship's permission I will remove Lieutenant Miller, who is a good young man, out of the cutter you have been so good to name after me ; for cutters are the ruin and destruction of every lieutenant who is put into them, and the masters of hired ones always conduct them best.

Should it be determined to keep this fleet here, at all hazards, when Portugal concludes her peace, which I fear she will do on the most ignominious terms if Spain approves them, there will be a necessity for my receiving instructions from the Board to remove the stores and provisions to Gibraltar ; and some general direction given to my friend O'Hara to protect them ; for he is so tremblingly alive to the idea of inducing a cannonade and bombardment, that until lately he suffered the Spanish gunboats to approach the batteries with impunity, and went so far as to threaten an officer with arrest, who fired upon them when they were attacking one of our frigates very near the works ; and the recent death of the Marquess de Roben (commandant at the lines), with whom he lived upon the best terms, and who was a liberal-minded man and a good officer, will make his situation more critical.

The person to succeed me should possess both

¹ But see *post*, p. 445. He gave Lord Spencer a different opinion on what he had seen in Genoa.

temper and good nerves, or he will be in continual hot water, and terrified at this anchorage, which appals many a good fellow under my command. Whenever the fleet is driven by stress of weather or accident to take shelter within the Mediterranean—for it cannot rely on any resource from Portugal, which will be entirely (as in truth it is at this instant) governed by Spain—Tetuan Bay under sail or even at an anchor, with westerly wind, taking care to get under way on the appearance of an easterly wind or a swell from that quarter, appears the only expedient. A few ships at a time may anchor safely in Rosia Bay with good ground tackle, which was not the case, as acknowledged by the Navy Board, when we met with such fatal accidents; and an officer of ability and firmness (might I presume to name the person, it should be Sir John Colpoys) may do a great deal, if Spain does not bombard and cannonade the Rock, in the event of which the depôt of provisions and stores will infallibly be destroyed and no ship ride in Rosia Bay without being exposed to shells. This is the best opinion I have to offer to your lordship upon prospective circumstances, and I greatly lament being obliged to make use of an amanuensis to copy it, my health suffering exceedingly from sitting too long at the pen.

I have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful

and obedient servant,

ST. VINCENT.

Ville de Paris, at anchor before Cadiz. 1st May, 1798.

(Received 22nd May, 1798. Answered 9th July.)

SPENCER TO ST. VINCENT

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

1st May, 1798.

My dear Lord,—I enclose you a duplicate of my letter of the 29th April that in case the cutter which carried it out should have failed of finding your lordship you may be apprised of its contents. The packet in which this will be delivered to you will I hope be accompanied by such a force as to enable you completely to fulfil the two objects which in the present circumstances of Europe it is so necessary we should if possible accomplish, viz., to frustrate the attempts of the French in the Mediterranean and to keep the Spaniards in check at the same time.¹ The mode in which, as your lordship will perceive, we had proposed to enable you to do this appeared to be liable to some objections which the measure now taken will not be exposed to; and though by making this large detachment at this moment from our home force we expose ourselves to a considerable degree, yet all things considered, it has been judged better for the King's service to incur this risk than to fail in the very important objects which may be obtained by the appearance at this time of a strong squadron in the Mediterranean, and by the exertions which so active an officer as Sir Horatio Nelson may make there.

I am aware that in the choice of the ships I have been guided merely by the circumstance of this particular squadron being at the moment

¹ The reinforcement consisted of eight ships-of-the-line under Rear-Admiral Sir Roger Curtis in the *Prince* (98). It arrived on 24th May.

collected on the coast of Ireland, and, though not fitted for foreign service, in a condition, however, to serve very well for some months, except with respect to provisions, of which they necessarily must be rather short when they arrive on your station. These, however, I trust they will immediately be supplied with, and though there are one or two ships which are not exactly such as I should have chosen to send out to you on a less pressing emergency, I am yet willing to hope that, with such men as some at least of their captains, you will not think the recruit a bad one.

Captain Day, whom I saw this morning and who has been some time at Genoa watching the progress of the preparations there, says that from his observations when he left that place (on the 13th April) it appeared to him impossible that the armament there should be ready before the 11th or 12th of May, and they were to rendezvous at Ajaccio in Corsica, where it is probable they will be some time before they can be ready to proceed to whatever is their destination. He states the transports to be in such a state as not to be likely to stand a voyage to the westward of the Straits, and it is therefore most probable that they are destined either for the coast of Spain or Naples, or (though I can scarce believe it) for the Levant. Wherever they are destined, I most sincerely hope you may be able to dispose of them in another way, and the effect which will be produced by it will, you may be assured, be of such magnitude in every point of view, that it is hardly calculable.

I need not recommend to you the utmost secrecy (more especially with respect to Portugal) of your intentions, as they might, perhaps without

reason, be alarmed at the idea of any division of your fleet taking place.

Believe me, my dear Lord, with great truth,
Your very faithful and obedient
humble servant,
SPENCER.

Admiralty. 1st May, 1798.
To the Earl of St. Vincent [&c.]

ST. VINCENT TO SPENCER

19th May, 1798.

My Lord,—I am at this moment honoured with your lordship's letter of the 2nd instant, by the Valiant lugger, and I have great satisfaction in acquainting your lordship that the ships named in the enclosed list (to which I shall add the Colossus if she arrives from Lisbon in time) have six months' provisions of all species on board, except bread and wine, of which they have as much as they can store ; are well stored and their water kept up from day to day, and held in constant readiness to proceed, in order to intercept Rear-Admiral Sir H. Nelson in his way down the Mediterranean, with instructions to carry the orders I have this day received into execution.¹ The whole of these ships are in excellent order, and so well officered, manned and appointed I am confident they will perform everything to be expected from them. I very much lament having no frigates to add, for Sir H. Nelson has the whole except the Sea Horse and Thalia. The former must go to Lisbon for supplies, and the latter is taking a

¹ Nelson had left the fleet on 2nd May under the original orders for making a reconnaissance in the Mediterranean, and had left Gibraltar on the 9th with three of the line, two frigates and a sloop.

section of the ground about Cape Spartel, and two frigates are necessary to be within call of me. I have directed Captain Troubridge to pick up the *Leander* appointed to cruise between Cape de Gata and Oran, if he can lay hold of her.

I have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful
and obedient servant,
ST. VINCENT.

Ville de Paris, at anchor before Cadiz. 19th May, 1798.
(Received 6th June, 1798. Answered 9th July.)

ENCLOSURE

Culloden	.	.	.	.	Troubridge.
Goliath	.	.	.	.	Foley.
Minotaur	.	.	.	.	Louis.
Defence	.	.	.	.	Peyton.
Bellerophon	.	.	.	.	Darby.
Majestic	.	.	.	.	Westcott.
Swiftsure	.	.	.	.	Hallowell.
Theseus	.	.	.	.	Miller
Zealous	.	.	.	.	Hood.
Colossus	.	.	.	.	Murray

Should she arrive from Lisbon in time.

ST. VINCENT TO SPENCER

PRIVATE.

15th July, 1798.

My Lord,—Although the enclosed copies of letters from Sir Horatio Nelson are not fit for the

eye of a *gossiping* Board, it is proper your lordship should see the inmost recesses of such a soul as Nelson's.¹ By all the information obtained from *Le Sensible*,² and I have read near a thousand letters found in her, the Admiral proceeded from Ischia, with his pilots on board, intending to pass through the Faro of Messina, and to push for Malta the very day the French Armada was to sail from thence, the surrender of the island not having been known at Naples.

I have the honour to be, with the truest respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful
and obedient servant,
ST. VINCENT.

Ville de Paris, before Cadiz. 15th July, 1798.
(Received 16th August, 1798.)

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

PRIVATE.

North Street. 9th June, 1798

My dear Lord,—Did the instructions to Lord St. Vincent mention that Egypt might be in the contemplation of Bonaparte's expedition? It

¹ Five copies of letters from Nelson, written during his chase of Bonaparte, are enclosed. They are dated 17th, 24th, 28th, 31st May, and 15th June, and will be found in *Nicolas*, vol. iii. pp. 20, 22, 32; and vol. vii. pp. cli, clii.

² *Le Sensible* had been captured by Capt. E. J. Foote of the *Seahorse* (38) on 27th June after chasing her all night from the coast of Sicily to Pantellaria. She was a 36-gun frigate bound for Toulon, having on board General Baraguay-d'Hilliers and loot from Malta, which had capitulated to Bonaparte on 12th June. *James*, ii, 234.

may be whimsical, but I cannot help having a fancy of my own on that subject.

Yours sincerely,

HENRY DUNDAS.¹

[*Endorsed on back* : That I had mentioned it in my private Letter.]

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Wimbledon. Saturday morning, 8 o'clock.

My dear Lord,—India has occupied my thoughts all night.² I must in the most earnest manner urge your lordship not [to] take up this as a matter of common official arrangement where you may be at liberty to distribute your ships according to convenience or the best theoretical way of employing them. At present the [*illegible*] is upon the first stake of the Empire, the fate of which may turn upon an hour. If the plan of the French is to go by the Red Sea, it is demonstrable that a small active squadron at the mouth of the Red Sea is fatal to their project. That squadron coming an hour too late is good for nothing. It is *impossible* that any other service can be equally pressing, nor is there another on which so much may turn. Surely, therefore, nothing ought to be left to accident that can be avoided; on the contrary double chances ought to be taken. What right have we to suppose the wind is to remain in its present state? A change may lock

¹ Lord Grenville had recently received information that a number of men of science were to go with Bonaparte's expedition and that they were taking a large library of books relating to Egypt, the Near East and India. *Dropmore Papers*, iv. 193.

² Since 1784 Dundas had been a member of the East India Board of Control, and is said to have been the dominant spirit from the first. In 1793 he became its President.

us up in the Channel for any given time. I need not say more ; your lordship must feel all I do on the subject.

Yours sincerely,
HENRY DUNDAS.

(Private.)

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Wimbledon. $\frac{1}{2}$ past 7.

My dear Lord,—I thank you most cordially for your news.¹ If our hopes are confirmed all is well ; if they should not, I see a sad Herculean labour before us, and I shall tremble for the loss of all my exertions for twelve years past, which wanted only a few years more to complete them. Under such circumstances I am free to confess that I feel an anxiety I never experienced in public life before. I expect Lord Grenville at eight o'clock, and shall keep your note to shew him, in case he has not heard the intelligence, and I shall then return it to you immediately.

Yours very sincerely,
HENRY DUNDAS.

(Private.)

SIR JOHN ORDE TO SPENCER

16th June, 1798.

My Lord,—Sir Horatio Nelson, a junior officer and just arrived from England, is detached from the fleet in which we serve up the Mediterranean with the command of twelve sail-of-the-line, a

¹ Probably news that Nelson had been detached in pursuit of Bonaparte.

number of frigates, &c., &c. ; and Sir Roger Curtis has joined Lord St. Vincent and taken the command in the 2nd post, thereby lowering me to the 4th. I must not say I am surprised at these measures, although very different from what I had hoped to have experienced ; but I cannot conceal from your lordship how much I feel hurt at the former in particular. Indeed were I insensible to it, I should be unworthy the rank I hold and the distinction I have sought for and endeavoured to merit. After having been employed the greatest part of the late winter in the command of a small squadron blockading Cadiz, a station honourable and confidential, in which I acquitted myself successfully, and I believe in manner entirely satisfactory to the commander-in-chief, I little expected to have been placed at this moment in the situation I stand, so truly mortifying to an officer of my feelings or pretensions. I will not, however, on this occasion trouble your lordship with a recapitulation of the claims I conceive I have to a better lot than is now assigned me, nor will I remind your lordship of the grounds on which I offered myself to you and was accepted on my return from a very troublesome service at Plymouth, as both must be fresh in your memory. I have felt from my earliest youth the debt I owe as an individual to my country and have endeavoured faithfully to discharge it by a sacrifice of my best days to the duties of my profession in every climate and country where required to go. The same principle and the most disinterested motives will lead me, at this moment of danger and national alarm, to persevere in the same line of conduct, however unpleasant it may be rendered or wounding to my feelings, so long as my services shall continue to be called for, my health will permit, and my

character as an officer and a gentleman will suffer me to do so.

I have the honour to be, with due respect and consideration,

Your lordship's most obedient,
humble servant,

J. ORDE.

Princess Royal, off Cadiz.

ST. VINCENT TO SPENCER

12th August, 1798.

My Lord,—If I understand your character, you like plain dealing. I therefore declare, unless I have power to promote the lieutenants of the Ville de Paris, who have served with me during the last twelve months, I cannot serve an hour longer with honour to myself or advantage to my country.

The Captains Aplin and Ellison are drivellers, and there are others in this squadron totally unfit to command ships of war in these times.

Lord William Stuart is a gallant enterprising young man, and I shall have great pleasure in promoting him. Mr. Mundy, although not so powerful, is an amiable young man, and shall be taken care of.

Sir John Orde has conducted himself in such a manner towards me that I shall send him to England, in the first ship that I can spare, *coûte qu'il coûte*.

In the representations that I have at different times made to your lordship, I have been guided solely by my zeal for his Majesty's service. The times are critical and dangerous, my Lord. Faction must be suppressed ; and those captains who are

incapable of preserving order, discipline and subordination in the ships they command ought to be removed ; or where is the commander-in-chief to be found who will be responsible for the conduct of a fleet in the constant blockade of an enemy's port with one half the force, which may be opposed to him by that enemy at any hour?

I have the honour to be, with all due respect,

Your lordship's most obedient
humble servant,

ST. VINCENT.

Ville de Paris, off Cadiz.

SPENCER TO ST. VINCENT

21st August, 1798.

My Lord,—

I am very happy to hear that the Marquis de Niza¹ is at length gone up the Mediterranean, and hope that he may be in time to partake of the success which I still cannot help being sanguine in flattering myself Nelson will meet with, notwithstanding the report which has this day reached us of Bonaparte's having landed at Alexandria on the 7th or 8th of July.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd July, and am very anxious to hear again from you, as we have no accounts of Nelson that can be depended upon, since his being on the 21st of June off Cape Passaro.

I have the honour to be,

Your lordship's very faithful
humble servant,

SPENCER.

¹ Rear-Admiral commanding a small Portuguese squadron.

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Tynningham. 27th August, 1798.

My dear Lord,—Although the accounts from Constantinople are confused, I take it for granted there is no just ground of doubt that Bonaparte has made good his landing with a large force in Egypt. You are well aware, in consequence of what at different times has passed between us, of the very unfortunate consequences to the country which in my opinion are likely to result from that circumstance. There is no price too dear to be paid for it, if by any means that army could be rooted out of Egypt, and its further progress prevented. I am always in hopes we shall hear of Nelson doing something brilliant with regard to the fleet, as it is so far good and will gratify the feelings of the country, but neither that nor any other success will compensate to the country in reality for the misfortune it has undergone by the French with a large army getting possession of Egypt. The circumstance haunts me night and day, and will take away much of the pleasure I proposed to myself from my present excursion.

It was not, however, to trouble you with my lamentations on that subject that I take up my pen at present, but I wish in the most earnest manner to recommend it to your early attention to make such a distribution of your naval force in that part of the Morea as to prevent the French from Toulon, Malta, or any other quarter reinforcing from time to time the army they have got into Egypt. What is got there might be watched and counteracted the best way we can, that it may do as little mischief as possible, but in the view I have always had of the subject, and do still more forcibly than ever entertain, it is of the last moment that the enemy should be prevented from gradually

SPENCER TO ST. VINCENT

29th August, 1798.

My Lord,—I would if possible have sent you out the *Robust*, if she had been in a state fit for going on foreign service, but I learn that owing (as I believe) to a practice lately persevered in by the Navy Board, in contradiction to repeated recommendations from me of omitting the use of paper under the copper of ships they have recently new coppered, she is very leaky, and therefore would most probably add to the trouble and disappointment which I am sorry to find you have on one or two occasions experienced from defects in the state of ships sent from hence.

His Majesty was pleased to reward Sir Robert Calder's services by conferring on him a baronetage, with which I have reason to believe he is very well satisfied. I am rather anxious to know whom your lordship has in contemplation to succeed him as captain of the fleet, for I conclude you mean to have one, and indeed venture to express my hopes that you will, in order to avoid taking too much fatigue upon yourself. Captain Grey will rejoin you immediately, and I have directed Mr. Bathurst to have a commission for rank as master and commander, as a compliment due to his having had the honour of acting as captain of the *Ville de Paris*.¹

The *Peterel* is ordered to return immediately, and I have foreborne from appointing any one to that sloop that I might not interfere with the arrangements you had made. Captain Caulfield will therefore take her out again.

I have great satisfaction in making my compli-

¹ Capt. George Grey was 2nd captain in the *Ville de Paris*.

ment to your lordship on the handsome testimony which the Parliament of Ireland (in imitation of that of this country) are about to give of their sense of your distinguished public services, and I have the honour to be,

Your lordship's very faithful and
obedient humble servant,
SPENCER.

LORD GRENVILLE TO SPENCER

PRIVATE.

Dropmore. 9th September, 1798.

My dear Lord,—I send you herewith two papers, the first a letter from Count Woronzov with its inclosures,¹ the other a letter from the American Minister. With respect to the application from the Emperor of Russia for an augmentation of our naval force in the Mediterranean, I imagine you have already in some degree anticipated the request ; but it will be material to consider what turn we shall give to our answer, as it is so important to us to keep the Emperor Paul in good humour with us. What he has done, both with respect to the reinforcement of five ships which he sends here with liberty to us to employ them in the Channel service, and also in his offer of a fleet to pass through the Dardanelles into the Mediterranean, does really afford a considerable proof of zeal and energy ; and I flatter myself when they are once embarked it will not be easy to draw back, whatever the difficulties may be to which they may find themselves exposed. It is a great

¹ Count de Woronzov, Russian Minister in London, was now negotiating with Lord Grenville a renewal of the coalition against France.

consolation to me to see that Nelson proposed to return immediately from Sicily to the Levant, for although it may be very doubtful whether he can do anything at Alexandria without land forces, yet his presence in those seas is absolutely necessary to give encouragement to the Porte, and indeed to Russia herself.

Ever, my dear Lord,
Most truly yours,
G.

(Received 10th September, 1798.)

SPENCER TO ST. VINCENT

16th September, 1798.

My Lord,—I have seldom experienced a more severe disappointment than in the accounts which have lately reached us from the Mediterranean ; for though I did not give full credit to the very extravagant reports which had been propagated almost all over Europe of the decisive victory said to have been obtained by Sir Horatio Nelson over Bonaparte, yet I confess that my confidence in the superiority of his squadron, added to the great probability from their respective situations about the 21st of June last of their meeting before the French fleet reached its destination, had led me to flatter myself that there might have been a considerable foundation for the report. The present situation, however, of the two fleets in the Mediterranean leaves but little hope that anything very decisive can take place, and it of course becomes necessary to consider what will be the most desirable object to look at for our future operations there. It appears that Sir H. Nelson

sailed from Syracuse on the 26th July in search of the enemy (of whose arrival at Alexandria he was not then apprised). When he learns where they are, it is likely enough that he will make some attempt on them ; and perhaps if he finds (as he probably may) that they are not to be attacked in port without too great risk for his own ships, he will continue to block them up. It is in this view of the subject that I think it necessary to throw out some observations to your lordship, because it appears to me that a very great degree of the effect and impression which the existence of a British squadron in the Mediterranean produces on the politics of Europe, will be entirely lost if our fleet is tied down to a station so distant and so unproductive as a cruise off Alexandria. In every point of view, it seems preferable that their headquarters should be in the neighbourhood of the Two Sicilies. They are there more secure of supplies, and more centrally situated for any purpose which may occur for employing them ; and the great object of giving courage and support to the Kingdom of Naples, which from the peculiarity of its present connection with the Court of Vienna stands in rather a higher rank in the scale of politics than on a superficial view might at first appear, will be much more effectually obtained by the presence of such a naval force, which may at the same time be very usefully employed in distressing Malta, and intercepting the communication between France and Egypt.

As soon as it became certain that the French expedition was pointed to the East, the first object that occurred, short of destroying it on its passage, was to excite a powerful resistance to its progress in that part of the world ; and fortunately it appears that the Porte has at length seen the

subject in its true light, and is disposed to exert itself in preventing the French army from overrunning all its dependencies, which must evidently lead to the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire if not checked in time. The Emperor of Russia has also come forward, and there is great reason to hope that some concert will be arranged between those two Powers to protect the Levant from the French. Should this be the case, I think that we have not much to fear from their progress towards the East Indies ; and the result of these observations tends to confirm me in the opinion that our proper object in the Mediterranean will be (unless any particular and immediate object of attack should offer itself) to give as much security as possible to those States of Italy who still may choose to defend their independence, and to render the acquisition of Malta as a stepping stone to the Levant of as little use as possible to the enemy. By this means it appears not improbable that their army being resisted by land (as we hear it is) and unsupplied or at least but very imperfectly supplied by sea, will soon melt away, and be of very little if any service in promoting the extravagant and gigantic plans which they have conceived, and have already carried on so much further than on common grounds of calculation we should have expected.

My principal view in throwing out the above suggestions for your lordship's consideration has arisen from the present state of European politics, on which I see so great an effect likely to be produced by the situation and movements of our fleet in the Mediterranean. That effect can only be kept up by its being in such a situation as enables it to give the protection which is so much wanted ; and though the destruction of the enemy's

fleet (if that could be effected) would immediately be the most satisfactory result we could obtain, the mere confining it to a remote part of the Levant would not, as I conceive, be a purpose of sufficient importance on the general state of affairs to be worth the difficulty and risk of its execution.

I have the honour to be,

Your lordship's most obedient,

humble servant,

SPENCER.

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

PRIVATE.

Dunira Lodge. 16th September, 1798.

My dear Lord,—By the memorandum I received from my office last night, I am extremely hurt to perceive that the 44th Regiment has not sailed along with the others for Gibraltar, and that the cause of its not doing so was the Admiralty not allowing the Expedition ship to go upon that service.¹ I cannot bring myself to write an official order at this distance, as there may be reasons so strong as to imperil the service in question; but except in the form of the letter I must entreat your lordship to consider this as the most pressing representation I can make on any subject; for, suspecting as I do that O'Hara will not be disposed to allow so much of his force to be taken from him, he will have too good ground to go upon for obstructing it, if he is deprived of one of the regiments specifically promised to him for the supply of his garrison.

I have not spirits enough on the subject of

¹ Dundas, after consulting St. Vincent, had decided to attempt the capture of Minorca with some of the Lisbon troops and part of the Gibraltar garrison.

the late accounts from Sir Horatio Nelson to say a word on that business. I must in charity presume when he tells his own story he will be able to give a good reason for his leaving Alexandria after he had got there in so auspicious a manner.

I remain, my dear Lord,

Yours sincerely,

HENRY DUNDAS.

GRENVILLE TO SPENCER

PRIVATE.

Cleveland Row. 18th September, 1798.

My dear Lord,—Since you left town we have received proposals for treaties of alliance with Naples and the Porte. It seems to me that it would clearly be advantageous to accede to both. The advantage of giving encouragement to *them* is considerable, and that of engaging the two Imperial Courts through these Powers is also very great. Russia is on the point of concluding an alliance with the Porte, and the Emperor has already given orders for sending seven or eight sail-of-the-line through the Dardanelles into the Archipelago, to act there in concert with any British force. Austria has actually concluded its alliance with Naples, and I believe the *casus foederis* by this time exists; for Nelson has, as you know, been received with his whole squadron in the port of Syracuse, and the language of the French Minister at Naples on this occasion has amounted very nearly to an actual declaration of war.

One of the material questions which naturally arises in the consideration of both these treaties

is that which relates to naval succour, the only aid that we can in the nature of things give them. The Convention of 1793 with Naples, which it is now proposed to renew, stipulates for the permanent employment of a British fleet in the Mediterranean superior to that of France; and to this stipulation there can, as I conceive, be no objection on the part of this country, provided they engage in return to furnish us with supplies, &c. But the Turkish project speaks of a force to be kept in the Archipelago.

The number is not specified—but any engagement to this effect I am aware must be attended with difficulty, and may run counter to the spirit of the stipulation with Naples; for the same squadron cannot be at the same time at Alexandria and Syracuse, nor can we allot a double force to this object.

My idea is therefore to insert in the Turkish treaty in lieu of this article one by which the King shall engage generally to make such disposition of the force which H.M. will maintain in the Mediterranean as may be best calculated to defeat the projects of the common enemy, and in concert with the respective naval forces of his allies to provide for the security of the coasts and seas in that quarter of Europe. But in order to make this stipulation more satisfactory, it would, I think, be highly expedient to be able to enter through our Minister at Constantinople into more explicit and detailed discussion of our plans and intentions. It is difficult for me to propose to you a project for that purpose, but I will submit to you my general ideas, subject of course to your judgment and correction. We know that Nelson has gone back from Syracuse towards the Archipelago. There he will learn that

the French fleet is at Alexandria, and he will certainly proceed to that place to ascertain whether it is not possible to attack them in port.

If he succeeds, or if he fails, his continuance there is in both cases useless, and I conceive his whole squadron cannot with any idea of policy or good faith be permanently employed in blocking Alexandria, leaving Naples and Sicily exposed to the urgent danger with which they are threatened, and which must overwhelm them if, in addition to their difficulties by land, their coast is left wholly destitute of naval defence. But on this point I take it to be absolutely necessary that Nelson should receive some positive instruction, for he may judge differently of the degree of danger at Naples, not having the same data we have, and may think it his duty to attach himself at all events to Bonaparte's fleet.

Suppose that such instructions are sent, much must of course be left to his discretion at such a distance, but we ought to put him in possession of our ideas.

So long as Bonaparte's fleet continues at Alexandria, or even so long as it is cut off from Toulon, much less than Nelson's whole fleet will be sufficient to protect Naples against anything that France can do by sea. The two Neapolitan ships joined to five or six British would be more than sufficient for this purpose. And in like manner much less than the whole would (when joined to Russian and Turkish ships, especially if the latter were aided by us in point of officers), afford ample security against any further naval progress of Bonaparte's fleet now at Alexandria.

I would propose therefore to separate the two into distinct commands—(or sub-commands)—making the Naples division considerably the

strongest, because of Toulon, Carthagenæ, Minorca and other objects, and leaving possibly not more than one or two, or perhaps three or four, ships under an active officer to co-operate with Turks and Russians. That officer, for many reasons which I have stated to you, I should propose to be Sir S. S.,¹ really not out of partiality to him, but thinking that his name is better known to both Russians and Turks, and his character better suited to act with them, than that of many other officers whom possibly you would prefer for a Channel cruise. But this last point is by no means essential to the rest. If you think any other officer fitter for the service, or if naval arrangements of any sort require that any other officer should be employed in it, you will of course so regulate it. *Possibly* in that case, but it is a bare *possibility*, he might be induced to accept, and the Turks to offer him, the *command* of their fleet or a portion of it destined to act with our's : but I think this would not be so good a plan as giving him the direction of our force in that quarter.

If these ideas are right, or indeed if they are not, it is a very pressing consideration to find some considerable number of proper naval officers to send out to Turkey to be employed in their service ; and I am persuaded that we ought not to lose the time that must be employed in making them the offer and receiving their answer ; but ought immediately to send out persons of this description to go by land to Constantinople, where in the worst event they would only find that they had lost their pains, but where there is every reason to think they might render most efficient and useful service.

¹ Sir Sidney Smith.

If you at all concur in these ideas I could send the project back to Smith,¹ with instructions to sign a general article to the effect above stated, and with some general intimation of the arrangements intended to be made, but adding that on these points he will receive more detailed information by his brother or such other officer as may be sent out to direct those who will successively arrive.

This need not, I hope, bring you back an hour sooner than you had intended, for you have not so many holidays as to make it reasonable for me to break in upon them.

Ever, my dear Lord,

Most sincerely yours,

G.

[*Endorsed by Lord Spencer* : (From Lord Grenville. Received 20th September, 1798.): 21st September acknowledged receipt and I have already written in general terms to Lord St. Vincent on this subject, and when I go to town I will talk over the matter more particularly and see what arrangements can be best made upon it.)]

DUNDAS TO SPENCER

Dunira Lodge. 20th September, 1798.

My dear Lord,—Although I wrote to you already on the subject since I left town, I cannot suppress the anxiety I feel to write to you again to give the most pointed instructions to Lord St. Vincent to make it a peculiar object of his attention to prevent any reinforcements getting from the French ports in the Mediterranean to join the force now under Bonaparte. If there is any truth in the reports of a spirit of resistance and

¹ Mr. Spencer Smith, Sir Sidney's brother, was British chargé d'affaires at Constantinople.

vigour existing at Constantinople, and that vigour is so exercised as to cost the French dear even in their successes, it may go far to disappoint their enterprise by exhausting their army if no reinforcements are permitted to join them. It is this consideration which renders vigilance so very material with a view to cut off these reinforcements, and induces me so urgently to bring it under your view.

I am, my dear Lord,

Yours very faithfully,

HENRY DUNDAS.

(Private. Answered 25th September, 1798.)

SPENCER TO DUNDAS

PRIVATE.

23rd September, 1798.

Dear Sir,—As I was not apprised of the arrangements which you had made for the conveyance of the 44th Regiment to Gibraltar, I cannot say what was the reason that they did not take place in the manner you intended. I am sure that whoever informed you that the cause of its not going thither was in the Admiralty must have been much mistaken, because the Expedition troopship was never specifically applied for [for] that, and if she had [been], it would have been impossible to destine her for that service, she being perfectly unfit for it, independently of the objection arising from her being commissioned as a man-of-war, on board of which I do not in these times consider it consistent with my duty to allow of troops being embarked, unless it be for a very short distance and on an emergency as pressing as that on which this very ship was

lately employed in carrying part of the militia to Ireland.

If it had been known here in time that the arrangements for the transports would not have allowed of accommodation for the 44th, I think a disposition might have been made to convey that regiment in one of the ships under the Transport Board ; but the difficulty was not communicated to us till all those ships were actually allotted to (and I believe sailed on) other services ; and it therefore only remained as an expedient (and a very inconvenient one) to give up a ship for the purpose to the Transport Board, which has accordingly been done ; and they are now preparing the *Admiral de Vries* for this service.

I cannot help taking this occasion of again in the most pointed manner representing the extreme absurdity of not putting the question of discipline between the army and navy on the footing on which it ought to be. If it were so, I will venture to assert that there never would be the smallest difficulty in the transportation of our troops from one station to another ; but as long as the prejudices of the officers in the land service are suffered to make an obstacle in the way of this very necessary and natural arrangement (which till the present war has uniformly been practised without objection on their part), no material expedition of a conjunct and secret nature can take place, and the public will be subjected to expense and Government to difficulties, when neither the one nor the other are necessary.

As to Sir Horatio Nelson, I hope he will have a pretty good story to tell at least. His missing the French fleet both going and returning was certainly very unfortunate ; but we must not be too ready to censure him for leaving Alexandria when he was

with the assistance of Austria, I do not quite despair of seeing it present an effectual obstacle to the further progress of the French in Italy.

I am in a considerable state of anxiety about the destination of this squadron from Brest. The blowing weather we have had may possibly thwart them a little, but it has at the same time been so highly unfavourable to our different squadrons on the coast of Ireland keeping their stations, that if that be their object, I think it not at all improbable that they may succeed in effecting a landing; and though I feel pretty confident of what would be the ultimate event, should they land, I cannot help seeing the very unpleasant consequences which in point of impression both on them and us will ensue from their having found it so easy to elude us on our own coasts. Should their destination be to any other part of the world (of which, however, I see no great probability), I think it must be to the West Indies, because they are too late for any co-operation with their Mediterranean expedition, and the numbers of men with which they are crowded take off the appearance of their destination being very far distant.

Believe me, dear Sir,

Your very faithful humble servant,

SPENCER.

Admiralty. 25th September, 1798.

The Portsmouth telegraph informed us yesterday that dispatches were arrived in the Dover armed transport from Jamaica. I wish they may not bring bad accounts from St. Domingo, for I observed an article in one of the French papers a few days ago which said that we had evacuated

Lord Henry Paulet in the *Thalia*, which will give cordial satisfaction to her present officers and old crew, who adore him, and prove of great importance to the discipline of the service; for (as I have had frequent occasions to observe to your lordship) the decay of the vigour and discipline of the navy has originated with the officers, not with the men, and I am sorry to observe that the licence of speech, and constant attempts to lower the authority of superiors, is almost become universal.

The removal of a certain baronet from this squadron has produced a wonderful effect,¹ and all are returning to good sense and good manners.

Captain Digby will still get his *Alcmène*, and if your lordship approves of my putting Captain Draper into *Le Sensible*, which will highly gratify him, there will be a vacancy for Captain John Dixon in the *Princess Royal*; and as I trust Captain Joseph Bingham will be sent out to the *Prince George*, the two gallant and worthy admirals will be made supremely happy.²

The almost incredible and stupendous victory (in its probable consequences) which Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson and his gallant train of heroes has under the blessing of God obtained over the *Toulon* squadron gives an opening to promote Lord William Stuart, Mr. Mundy, Mr. Dunn, and Mr. Dacres, with two other lieutenants of the *Ville de Paris*, for I do assure your lordship that the service they have gone through, during the last eighteen months, with frequent and valiant exposure of their persons in the armed launches

¹ Sir John Orde had gone home early in September.

² Draper had been Orde's flag-captain. Bingham had been Sir William Parker's first lieutenant when he commanded the *Audacious* on the 1st of June, 1794.

(I wish I could say as much of the lieutenants of all the ships in the squadron) merits prompt reward, beyond anything I have ever seen. My intention is, if Sir James Saumarez succeeds in bringing the six ships-of-the-line down the Mediterranean, to promote the following masters and commanders into them—Captain James of *Le Corso*, Pierrepont of the *Kingfisher*, Bland of *l'Espoir*, Bowen of the *Transfer*, Clark of *l'Aurore*, prison ship, and Stevenson of the *Thunder Bomb*. Your lordship will observe that Sir Horatio Nelson is very desirous to have his son-in-law [*sic*], Captain Nisbet, made post into a good frigate, which is certainly due to the Admiral's unexampled services. If therefore, you are not able to send a frigate out, under a commander, who may on joining the *Bonne Citoyenne* take command of her, I will provide for him in the first frigate which becomes vacant, after the afore-mentioned arrangements have taken place. Captain Hoste is continued in the command of *la Mutine*, he being a relation of Admiral Nelson's, and a protégé of Lady Townshend's, to whom I never could give a refusal, and a very fine young man ; and I have ordered him back to Naples with dispatches as soon as *la Mutine* is victualled and stored at Gibraltar.

I have withheld the letter from Don Rodrigo de Souza to the Marquis de Niza (touching the retreat of the Portuguese auxiliary squadron from the Levant) and shall manoeuvre to gain time ; for although I expect no real service from those ships while the Marquis commands them (unless Captain Retalick produces it), demonstration is something.¹

¹ Capt. Retalick, R.N., had just been appointed to the Marquis de Niza's flag-ship.

I have desired Sir Horatio to keep the *Alexander* with him, if he can get her re-masted, and, when I get five ships-of-the-line to replace the *Blenheim*, *Excellent*, *Orion*, *Culloden*, and *Colossus*, I will send a ship or two more to him.

Colonel Stuart, the Adjutant-General, is now with me arranging matters for the expedition, and I shall proceed to Gibraltar soon in order to set it forward.¹

I have the honour to be, with great respect,
Your lordship's very faithful
and obedient servant,
ST. VINCENT.

Ville de Paris, before Cadiz.

I enclose copies of interesting letters from Sir Horatio Nelson and Captain Troubridge for your lordship's special perusal.

ST. V.

ENCLOSURES

I

Sir John Acton to Nelson

Naples. 9th September, 1798.

Sir,—The arrival in this bay of Captain Capel, with the stupendous news of the total destruction of the French naval force, at the mouth of the

¹ In June General Charles Stuart had been succeeded in Portugal by General Fraser and had gone home, but when Dundas suggested to St. Vincent the capture of Minorca, he had been sent out again at the Admiral's urgent request. St. Vincent told Dundas Stuart was the best general he had. Fortescue, iv. 606. He was now lieut.-general. The officer mentioned is probably Brevet-Colonel John Stuart (afterwards Sir John, Count of Maida), who had been acting as brigadier-general under Charles Stuart in Portugal.

Nile, by the brave and most energetic exertions of the squadron under your command, has filled their Sicilian Majesties and all their faithful subjects with the most sensible joy, gratitude and extensive admiration.

I have the honour to present to you, by their Majesties' orders, with their best and most sincere congratulations, and our full acknowledgements and conviction, that you have saved Italy, and especially the two Sicilies, from their ruin by a meditated invasion ; we may even say Europe itself, as the projects of a democracy, from the coasts of Morea and Macedonia, for involving Poland, was the intended meaning of the expensive armament under Bonaparte, in order to destroy, with an equal propagation of principles, Germany and at the same time the rest of Italy. Your presence, Sir, in these Seas, has forced another scheme, which less obnoxious to Europe, will have the final end which we wish for. You have saved us, Sir, by the most glorious action, which superior to many battles fought at sea, since ages, has this singular and important advantage, of being to all Europe, I repeat it, of the highest advantage. I hope, Sir, that you will live long to enjoy the true satisfaction of having produced so much benefit to all nations, and the blessing of many governments, gratified by your courage, ability, and that of your brave officers, and people, who have, under your direction, so unanimously and admirably conquered to the most surprising victory. I hope likewise for the general cause and support, that the Emperor will move and by his and the Ottoman Porte's declarations, will put Malta and Corfu, with its dependencies, very soon under a different flag. We are ready in what concerns ourselves for that purpose, and to

join in the most sanguine manner with your future undertakings, as soon as Vienna answer to repeated and warmest demands. Your name, Sir, and co-operation shall be a singular and sure omen for success. I join with my warmest solicitations for your glory, and in the best wishes for your welfare. Give me leave to assure you of my highest regard and attachment.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient and most

humble servant,

JOHN ACTON, Bt.

Rear-Admiral Sir H. Nelson, K.B., &c., &c.

II

Nelson to St. Vincent

14th September, 1798.

My dear Lord,—I send you my friend Hoste; oblige Lady Townshend and Mr. Coke; the youngster is worthy of it. I hope you will not think me too presuming in expressing my wishes for Captain Nisbet's being put in a good frigate. As Hope refuses *Thalia*, and has I hear asked for *Majestic*, if Josiah could replace him I should be gratified; for putting him into either *Terpsichore* or *Aurora*, who must go home, would be sad news to me. Depend on it he is very active, knows his business, but is certainly ungracious in the extreme. I have done, and excuse what I have said. My head is nearly well, but I am from various causes I believe going fast; my hectic cough is now at that pitch that I believe my lungs are every hour coming through my mouth.

At Naples it seems they are pleased for the moment. Hoste will tell you of the state of the

Généreux and Guillaume Tell.¹ My thanks are first due to God, and I can only say God bless you.

Ever your affectionate,

HORATIO NELSON.

I will do what I can to accommodate Troubridge. The Earl of St. Vincent cutter, Transfer, Terpsichore and Thalia shall soon be with you. I will write more by Thalia. Pray let me have Hoste, if you have the goodness to give him the Mutine. I hope you will support my letter to Mr. Nepean and Lord Spencer for payment of the prizes burnt by my order.

H. N.

III

Troubridge to St. Vincent

16th August, 1798.

Culloden, Bequies Road,² Mouth of the Nile.

My Lord,—Your lordship will have heard by Sir Horatio Nelson's letters and Captain Berry's of the misfortune that befell the Culloden just as I got within gunshot of the enemy. As we had no knowledge of the place and the soundings regular as we stood in, I did not conceive the smallest danger, the man at the lead calling out eleven fathoms when she struck. The only consolation I have to support me in this cruel case of the Culloden's striking, I had just time to make the signal to the Swiftsure and Alexander which saved them, or they must have inevitably been lost, as they would have been further on

¹ These were the only two ships, out of thirteen of the line, that escaped from Aboukir Bay.

² See *ante*, p. 470, note.

the reef, as they were hauling considerably within me. I trust Sir Horatio has done me the justice to say it was an unavoidable accident, and that every exertion in my power was used to save his Majesty's ship. It was long doubtful if I should be able to keep her afloat, after I got her off; the rudder gone and making seven feet water an hour. However, by great exertion the third day we got a new rudder made and hung, and with thrummed sails reduced the leak considerably. The false keel is gone, and probably part of the main, as she stuck very hard for nine hours with a very heavy swell. All the gripe I can see is off.¹ This unfortunate business has, I fear, almost finished the poor Culloden for this war. However I flatter myself I can still fight a good battle in her, if opportunity offers. I shall use every exertion to patch her up.

This stroke may induce the French to listen to moderate terms of peace, particularly as their army in Egypt is in a bad way, harrassed by the Mamelukes and Bedouins, and in want of everything. I took a courier of Bonaparte's, with all the letters. They seem to be all written in a desponding style; many of them I believe Sir Horatio sent to your lordship. Tallier, who is here with all the outcasts, says Barras and all his party will now be turned out. This reverse of fortune is what Bonaparte has not before experienced. A general discontent prevails; all the letters from both officers and soldiers curse the expedition and wishing themselves back to France. Their state at Alexandria is truly bad; the canal which fills the tanks at that place when the Nile overflows is not yet open, and I am told Europeans cannot stand the heat and fatigue.

¹ 'Gripe' = 'fore-foot.' Falconer.

The Arabs who used to perform this work are gone to join the different Beys they belong to in the Delta to oppose the enemy. All the water they have at present is brought by camels at a great expense ; the consumption is enormous ; upwards of four hundred sail of transports and merchants' ships in the harbours, besides the numerous inhabitants, soldiers, etc., that I much doubt if the camels can supply them. If we can intercept their convoy which they expect with provisions, they will all be starved ; not one of the captured ships had a week's salt meat in ; rice and water was the only food the sailors had, with a small proportion of bread. Our lads would not be very quiet on such scanty allowance, and not a drop of wine or spirits in their army. They extract a kind of spirit from dates, and drink it immediately ; this is all they have to support them in their fatigue. As we are now on the eve of moving from hence, I shall forward this to your lordship by the first opportunity. I was so fatigued and distressed at my misfortune, that I had not time or spirits sufficient to write to your lordship by the *Leander* or *Mutine*, which I trust your lordship will accept as an apology.

I am now fagging hard at the leak. I must and will make the *Culloden* last as long as your lordship has the command. The first harbour I get into I must patch her up. I think by a little exertion I shall succeed. Two pumps going I shall not mind ; we are fully equal to that. I endeavour and I believe succeed to make them believe the leak is nothing, for they dance every morning as usual, so that the exercise just keeps them in health. Sir Horatio will have given your lordship all the particulars of this business in a much superior manner than I could do.

I beg my best respects to Sir Robert and Captain Grey.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,
Your lordship's obliged and
obedient servant,
F. TROUBRIDGE.

P.S.—I forgot to mention to your lordship that myself and Hallowell took possession of the Island of Bequies.¹ This acquisition of territory in Egypt is not so bright a gem in the British Crown as Corsica, but as it was attended with no loss or expense, I am inclined to think it equally valuable. We brought off from it two 13½-inch mortars and four guns. These were placed on the island to protect the van of their line. They were at work getting them off, as their ships were now under our protection, but as Hallowell and myself approached, the launches put off with all the haste they could, and left us quiet possession. The mortars and guns are now in the Swiftsure.

T. GRENVILLE TO LORD AND LADY SPENCER

Dropmore. 5 o'clock.

My dear good people,—I cannot tell you how much in my heart and soul I am rejoicing at the glorious news which I have just heard. I know too how much you are both triumphing in this grand and magnificent event having fallen to the lot of Nelson, with his one lame arm and gallant English spirit. I know Lord S. will not be backward either in the rewards which should

¹ The little island off Aboukir Castle—re-named in the British Survey of 1799, 'Nelson's Island.' Lord Spencer called it Bequieres. See *ante*, p. 470, note.

ST. VINCENT TO SPENCER

6th October, 1798.

My Lord,—I am waiting to intercept General Stuart in his way from Lisbon to Gibraltar. Captain Duckworth is to be his colleague, and it will be absolutely necessary to give him a broad pendant with a captain, his presence being necessary in running into the port, which he will do with Argo. No expense or increase of patronage will be incurred, as Captain Digby is to be captain of the Leviathan *pro tempore*, to be succeeded by Captain Hay when Captain Draper takes command of Le Sensible. A Gibraltar privateer reported at Faro a few days ago that the French prizes were arrived at Gibraltar ; and as she fired a great deal of powder on the occasion, I believe it is true, and I have some hopes the Leander passed the Straits in a strong Levanter and is in England by this time.

I shall continue at Gibraltar until the event of the expedition is ascertained. Sir Roger Curtis will in my absence exert himself, I am sure, the want of frigates and cutters for communication being the only real distress he feels, and it is certainly a serious one. The water of his squadron is completed by the arrival of the watering transports from Lagos, and he has provisions in abundance, with the healthiest crews, and the best fitted and stored ships in the universe.

I fear your lordship will have much trouble and plague with Sir J. Orde, and I hope you will allow me to go to England to face him in any way he thinks fit, and to recruit my health, which I do assure you requires relaxation.

missioner Inglefield and his department had great merit in expeditiously filling the four transports (for the 42nd Regiment) which had been employed as watering vessels and had no cabins; and Mr. Tucker, the Agent-Victualler, cannot be too highly extolled for his dispatch in shipping the provisions from Water Port, the vilest wharf in the universe, although two reals is levied upon every pipe of wine landed there, under the pretext of cleaning the moles and keeping the wharfs in repair, neither of which is done, Water Port being without a crane, and the facing stones of the wharf are crumbled away and lying under water, to the ruin and destruction of all our boats, none of which can approach until three-quarters flood, which compels the Agent-Victualler to hire boats called 'Barcassas' of easy draught of water, at a very great expense to the public.¹ I have the pleasure to acquaint your lordship that there is the greatest energy among the artificers of the dockyard to prepare masts for the Defence, Bellerophon and Majestic;² the caulkers are upon the first named, and I hope to have her fit for sea in ten days or a fortnight, although I fear Captain Peyton, who is in a deplorable state of health, will not be able to go in her.

I have the honour to be, with great esteem and regard,

Your lordship's very faithful

and obedient servant,

ST. VINCENT.

Rosia House, Gibraltar.

¹ Barcaza = lighter.

² The two last-named ships had suffered the most severely at the Nile—nearly half the total casualties being credited to them.

ST. VINCENT TO SPENCER

12th November, 1798.

My Lord,—I lose a most valuable officer and amiable man in Captain Murray, but the Colossus is in such a ticklish state, I cannot justify the keeping her longer here. Your lordship would gratify me exceedingly and benefit the King's service by appointing him immediately to another ship and sending her out to this station, the more especially as the Goliath and Zealous must follow the Colossus soon, and the loss of three such men will be felt most severely. Captain Foley is in a bad state of health, and Captain Hood being executor to his late gallant brother will require some time in England.¹

Although my health and affairs require attention, I have come to a resolution to sacrifice both for the public good, being of opinion that the large field of operations, likely to take place on the coasts of the Mediterranean and Levant, make my presence more necessary than ever. I have good divisional admirals under my command, but I doubt their capacity to carry into execution measures of such extent as those in contemplation. I therefore shall not avail myself of any leave of absence your lordship may have influenced the Board to grant in consequence of the frequent and pressing applications I have made.

I have the honour to be, with the truest respect and esteem,

Your lordship's very faithful

and obedient servant,

ST. VINCENT.

Rosia House, Gibraltar.

¹ Samuel Hood of the Zealous was younger brother of Capt. Alexander Hood, who on 21st April had been killed in the Mars in capturing the French Hercule (74) off Brest.

ST. VINCENT TO SPENCER

CONFIDENTIAL.

Rosia House, Gibraltar. 6th December, 1798.

My Lord,—The recollection of what passed at Calvi made me very circumspect in the choice of a colleague to General Stuart;¹ neither Sir William Parker or Rear-Admiral Frederick would have done. I knew Commodore Duckworth to possess a large share of forbearance, which he acquired under the high hand of Captain Fielding, and the enclosed will justify my appointing him to the command. The General has many great and good points about him, but he is a niggard in his praise to the navy, and there are very few seamen who could act with him. I am about to send the Regiment de Roll to Minorca at his earnest request.

I have the honour to be, with real esteem and regard,

Your lordship's very faithful
and obedient servant,
ST. VINCENT.

(Received 23rd December, 1798.)

ENCLOSURE

Duckworth to St. Vincent

My Lord,—Though words can but faintly convey my feelings for the very distinguished situation in which you have done me the honour to place me, yet I cannot allow the Peterel to depart without assuring you that my heart is

¹ Referring to the unhappy relations between Hood and Stuart at Corsica in July, 1794, for which, in Sir John Moore's opinion, Hood was to blame. 'It is impossible,' he wrote, 'for any general to carry on service with him.' *Diary*, i. 153.

replete with gratitude, and offer you my warmest congratulations on the fortunate termination of this highly judicious concerted expedition, which will not only add fresh laurels to those you have so nobly attained, but mark to your king and country superior discernment. Feeling that the success of every expedition depends much upon unanimity, and knowing your wishes, I have studied accommodation with uncommon assiduity, that the public service should not be interrupted; and before my colleague landed I thought I had succeeded to a miracle; but soon after, when he discovered the game was likely to be easily played, if reinforcement was not thrown in, I saw he felt there would not be a sufficient portion of honour for us both, and became so proud and captious that it required great ingenuity and forbearance to follow up the ideas of a man who would sacrifice everything, the navy in particular, to military aggrandisement. However I was determined not to feel the path rugged, and employed all my management even to a sacrifice of my own consequence to fulfil the objects of my mission. But on my return from chasing the ships, which step was with his concurrence and wish, I asked to see the capitulation to sign, when I was astonished by an apparent demur, and sorely galled, though to avoid dissension I rather supplicated than demanded justice, when to my great amazement he observed I was not in the way to be consulted, consequently the capitulation was his.¹ But *we*

¹ After the troops were landed near Fornelles four Spanish ships were seen making for Ciudadella where the Minorca garrison was concentrated. They were four heavy frigates who the day before had captured the Peterel. Duckworth, without waiting to re-embark the seamen and marines he had landed, gave chase, headed the frigates back, and re-captured the Peterel.

kissed and are friends again ; yet as I have not seen his public letter, I forward a plain told tale of my own conduct, and that your lordship may take a comparative view of the services, I send a correct detail of all the movements of the army, and you may be assured my respect for your lordship removes the possibility of dispute. But the fact is I had driven the wolf from the door which had given much alarm, and the town though summoned the day I was absent and returning from the pursuit, did not capitulate on the 15th till the squadron stood close in, when the fear of the ships cannonading them and knocking their houses about their ears produced the effect as much as the army did on the other side. I have sent your lordship a copy of the articles of capitulation, which I am now fulfilling by embarking the Spanish troops for the Bay of Aleuda¹ and Peniscola, and I have the honour to be, my Lord, with the highest respect,

Your lordship's most obliged

and faithful humble servant,

J. T. DUCKWORTH.

Leviathan, off Fornelles. 19th November, 1798.

SPENCER TO ST. VINCENT

4th December, 1798.

My Lord,—I have a great many letters from your lordship to acknowledge, some of which I should have answered long before this, if I had not been very much occupied by a variety of public business of late ; and much of my time

¹ So in MS., but probably the Bay of Alcudia in Majorca is meant. Peniscola is the nearest place on the Spanish mainland—just south of Tortosa.

taken up by the circumstance of Lady Spencer's suffering under a very severe fit of illness. I have lately, from the several letters in which you expressed your wish to come home for a short time in the course of the winter, been in the expectation of seeing you, and of being enabled to talk over the subject of many of your letters instead of writing upon them. However, as the prospect of your availing yourself of the conditional leave of absence, which had been granted by the Board in compliance with your wishes, has been done away by your last letter of the 12th ultimo, I take the first moment to write to you ; and though I cannot by this opportunity enter into the matter of all your letters lately received, I cannot avoid taking the occasion of expressing how much pleasure I derived from finding that the arrangements you have made for the expedition to Minorca were so actively and secretly conducted by your lordship and General Stuart ; that the first intimation which has been in any degree made known to the public here of the destination of that expedition is a report which has prevailed since the arrival of the last Lisbon packet (which left Lisbon the 26th ultimo) that the island was in our possession. This report comes from Madrid, and I am very sanguine as to the truth of it, more especially as I have the satisfaction of learning from the same quarter that no preparations had been made by the Spaniards for guarding against the attack.

By the time this letter reaches you, Lord Keith will very probably have put himself under your command ; and I trust that you will be satisfied with one another, as I know him to be a very active and intelligent officer, and I am sure he is impressed with a very high respect for

your lordship. I thought upon the whole it would be a more advantageous arrangement to order Sir Roger Curtis home in the Prince, as it was only upon the spur of the occasion he was sent out, and the great diminution of the enemy's force in the Mediterranean, added to the large force which our allies have in that sea, make it unnecessary to keep as considerable a number of ships there as was originally intended. In the mean time we are endeavouring to bring forward some more frigates, which are very much wanted on every station, and I hope to be able to reinforce you in that class of ship soon, as I am well aware that the variety of different objects to which you will have to look will render them more necessary than ever.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,
 Your lordship's very obedient
 humble servant,
 SPENCER.

SPENCER TO ST. VINCENT

23rd December, 1798.

My Lord,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th November last.

Your lordship will ere this have perceived that the Board had granted you a conditional leave of absence ; but, notwithstanding the very pressing applications you had made for it, I felt in my own mind persuaded that unless your health absolutely required your return home you would see the subject exactly in the light in which I find by that letter you have seen it. The situation of the naval war in the Mediterranean,

and on the coasts of Spain and Portugal without the Straits, is in truth so critical and so important at this time, not only to the interests and honour of this country, but eventually to the existence, or at least to the independence, of almost every Power in Europe, that it is impossible to conceive a more extensive or a more interesting subject to occupy an active and enterprising mind ; and in thus describing it I feel that I need go no further to account for the determination which your lordship has taken of remaining in the centre of such a scene of action.

If we were not at present rather thrown behindhand in our information from the Continent by the want of three mails from Hamburg, which have been detained by a severe frost, I might probably have it in my power to write to you with rather more certainty on the general aspect of affairs at this moment, which I am particularly desirous of doing, because I think that now, more than ever perhaps before, the motion and operation of the British fleet under your command are involved with and have a decided influence upon the general state of European politics. If the Court of Vienna should determine to enter into war and give effectual co-operation and assistance to Naples, everything may probably be effected that one could wish for, and the decided steps which have been taken by the King of Naples, supported by the fleet under Lord Nelson, on one side of Italy, and the Russian and Turkish combined fleets on the other, would in such a case rescue the whole of Italy in a short time from the oppression of France, and go a great way towards driving the French back within their own limits. If the Emperor should have made any shabby bargain, and by that means have set

the French at liberty to turn their thoughts to some other point, I conclude that Spain and Portugal will be their next object, as being the only countries within their reach in any respect from which they have not already reaped a pretty full harvest of plunder. In either of these cases the ascendancy we have regained in the Mediterranean is calculated to be of infinite use ; and the means which the possession of Minorca gives to us of making diversions by way of demonstration only (for of course I am aware that no more is possible) on the eastern coasts of Spain and the southern coasts of France, according to the circumstances of the moment, must be considered as one of the principal advantages which in the present state of things is likely to be derived from the acquisition. We have reason to believe from our latest accounts, that there are now serious intentions at Madrid of attacking Portugal, and we are of course bound to give every possible assistance to that country ; but as it is not very easy for us to do so in the present state of our forces by direct succours in troops (at least to any material extent beyond what are now there), much good might possibly be done by occupying the attention of the Spaniards on the opposite side of their kingdom, and making it necessary for them to keep a considerable part of their forces on their Mediterranean coast. The same reasoning will hold to a certain degree in the case of the French army moving towards Spain for the plausible purpose of assisting them in an attack on Portugal, though in reality with a view of plundering both those countries ; and without entering more deeply into the statement of the various operations which our present advantageous situation in the Mediterranean may suggest, I

am satisfied I have said enough to bring the whole subject sufficiently under your lordship's view, and that I may leave it to you to make the proper use of any opening that may arise for counteracting or distressing the enemy.

I am truly concerned (as I have no doubt you will be) at the unfortunate loss of the *Colossus*, but I have no doubt that Captain Murray, so far from having incurred any blame on the occasion, will appear to have very great merit in saving the whole of his ship's company under circumstances so difficult and distressing; and I hope it will not be long before I shall be enabled to put him afloat again in a good ship.¹

I have the honour to be,

Your lordship's most obedient

humble servant,

SPENCER.

SPENCER TO ST. VINCENT

24th December, 1798.

My Lord,—

You mention in your letter of the 23rd September last (the receipt of which I have already acknowledged) your intention of appointing Captain Troubridge First Captain, a determination which I cannot but approve, as I know of no one more fit for the situation; but I must at the

¹ The *Colossus* had been sent home by Nelson for a refit and was taking to England from Sicily a large part of Sir W. Hamilton's art collection. She was wrecked amongst the Scilly Islands on 7th December, on the eve of completing her voyage, and became a total loss with all her precious cargo. The court martial acquitted Murray of all blame. *Dict. of Nat. Biog. sub. voc.* Sir Geo. Murray.

same time take the liberty of suggesting that if you wish to employ him on any detached services, it would be far better to let him remain in one of your most active 74's, because it will be impossible to keep a ship open for him in the way which you suggest, and equally so to authorise you in a general manner to give him a broad pendant, more especially while there are any senior captains serving under your lordship on the same station.

I have the honour to be,

Your lordship's very obedient

humble servant,

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